

VERELST'S RULE IN INDIA

BY

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PREFACE

Verelst's governorship marks a period of British rule in India, which has not yet received the attention it deserves. Historians have allowed this period to remain a mere gap in British Indian history, and have dealt with it by misleading generalisations rather than impartial research. The present monograph embodying the results of the researches that I have carried on during the last several years represents an humble attempt to supply a detailed history of Verelst's rule from the available original sources.

The MS. records of the Government of India, and of the Government of Bengal, have been exhaustively studied and utilised by me in preparing this work. Besides the MS. records which, of course, form the principal source of information, I have made a careful study of all relevant and available documents and authorities mentioned by me in the Bibliography.

I may be permitted to point out here that both in my presentation of the facts, and in the expression of my opinions, I have tried to avoid bias, and have made an honest effort to make a sober and dispassionate study of a Governor who was not only vilified and misrepresented in his own day, but has since been either totally ignored, or remembered merely as one of the mediocre characters typifying the so-called "lowest pitch in Anglo-Indian history." Verelst deserves a higher place in Indian history, for he was doubtless one of the foremost, if not the foremost, among the Company's civilian-administrators preceding Warren Hastings.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, K.T., D.Litt., C.I.E., M.R.A.S. (Hony.), etc., who is well-known for the ungrudging and sympathetic assistance he always renders to junior workers in the field of historical research, for all the advice and encouragement he has given me,

My thanks are also due to Prof. H. H. Dodwell of the University of London, whose kind interest in my work has proved most helpful to me. I should also express my obligation to the Government of India, and to the members of the Record Offices at Delhi and Calcutta for all the facilities I obtained in connection with my researches. I am particularly grateful to the authorities of the Indian Historical Records Commission, who not only appointed me as a Corresponding Member of the Commission, but also approved and published certain portions of the present work, submitted to them for reading and discussion at the public meetings of the Commission held in 1937, 1938, and 1939, at Lahore, Poona, and Calcutta respectively. I should be ungrateful, if I did not acknowledge here my special obligation to the authorities of the Indian Press, Ltd., in general, and to my esteemed friend, Mr. Hariprasanna Ghosh, Deputy Manager of the Press, in particular, but for whose kind interest the book could never have been published so early.

The University,
Lucknow,
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NANDALAL CHATTERJI.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abs. R.	The volume of Abstracts of (Persian) letters received.
Abs. P.L.R.	—do— —do—
Abs. I.	The volume of Abstracts of (Persian) letters issued.
Alld. Univ. Ms.	Allahabad University Manuscript.
Beng. Pub. Cons.	Bengal Public Consultations.
Beng. Rev. Cons.	Bengal Revenue Consultations.
Beng. Secret Cons.	Bengal Secret Consultations.
Beng. Sel. Com.	Bengal Select Committee Proceedings.
Cop. I.	The volume of Copies of (Persian) letters issued.
Cop. P.L.I.	—do— —do—
Cop. R.	The volume of Copies of (Persian) letters received.
I. O. Cons.	Copies of Consultations obtained from the India Office.
Letter from Court.	Letter from the Court of Directors.
Letter to Court.	Letter to the Court of Directors.
O. C.	Original Consultation.
Orig. R.	The volume of Original letters received.
<i>Siyar.</i>	<i>Siyarul Mutakhkhirin.</i>
Trans. I.	The volume of Translations of (Persian) letters issued.
Trans. P.L.I.	—do— —do—
Trans. R.	The volume of Translations of (Persian) letters received.
Verelst's View, etc.	"A View of the Rise, Progress and Present State of the English Government in Bengal."

CHAPTER I

THE ABDALI MENACE TO BENGAL (1767—69)

The most pressing problem that Verelst had to face after taking charge of the Presidency and Governorship of Fort William was the defence of Bengal against the threatened advance of Ahmed Shah Abdali. The latter had already appeared¹ in India with a large army, and it was reported that the force which he now commanded was probably more formidable² than the one that had routed the Marathas at Panipat. In his farewell letter to the Select Committee, Clive had particularly warned the members of the danger from the Abdali, and of the possibility of an alliance between Mir Qasim and the latter in the following words,³ "Cossim Ally Cawn . . . is gone to the north, and there is no doubt but that intriguing miscreant will use all the influence which money and persuasion can give to prevail upon Abdallah to come this way should he be induced to make an attempt . . . Let us consider that the Northern Prince commands an army of the same nation which under Nadir Shaw conquered Persia, defeated the Turks, and routing the army of the Great Mogul made themselves masters of his person, his capital Delhi, and all his treasures. We ought, therefore, in my opinion, to unite our whole forces against this warrior . . ."

The widespread rumour that the Abdali had come at the instigation of Mir Qasim to restore⁴ the latter to the 'masnad'

¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 33A.

² *Ibid.*, No. 15A.

³ Beng. Sel. Com. Jan. 16, 1767.

⁴ Orig. R. 1764-69, Nos. 13 and 42. Col. Smith too had previously written to Clive on Dec. 20, 1766, "From several quarters I have intelligence that Cossim Ally Cawn by some advances of money and larger promises has much contributed to Abdalla's irruption." (*Vide* Beng. Sel. Com. March 27, 1767.)

of Bengal, served only to intensify the anxiety of the authorities at Calcutta, and they deemed it unwise "to remain inactive spectators of an invasion which threatened to overwhelm the political system of all India."⁵

The extreme eagerness of Shah Alam and Shujaudaulah for an immediate compromise with the Abdali made it all the more necessary to assure them of the determination of the English to oppose the alleged designs of the invader. It was naturally apprehended at Calcutta that if prompt measures were not taken for the defence of Oudh and Bengal, the King and the Vazir could easily be prevailed upon to join the Abdali against the English. That such an apprehension was not entirely fanciful would be apparent from the fact that the Governor received at this time definite information to the effect that the ultimate views of the conqueror extended beyond Delhi, and that induced either by the intrigues of Mir Qasim, or tempted by the opulence of Bengal, he might endeavour to attack Bengal and possess himself of this province.⁶

The Vazir was particularly nervous, as he suspected a secret understanding between the Abdali and the Rohillas,⁷ and was therefore anxious to be sure of English protection. The Vazir's irresolute and doubtful attitude made Sir Robert Barker almost suspicious as to his intentions.⁸ As for the King, he was so panic-stricken that he planned to send away⁹ his family from Allahabad to a neighbouring fort belonging to Raja Beji Singh of Manikpur, and made overtures to the Marathas for an alliance against the common foe.¹⁰ The Governor, therefore, repeatedly pressed them not to entertain

⁵ Sel. Com. to Court, April 10, 1767.

⁶ Beng. Sel. Com. Feb. 19, 1767.

⁷ Trans. R. 1767-68, Nos. 20 and 23.

⁸ Beng. Sel. Com. March 24, 1767. Sir Robert Barker wrote "However, the Nabob Shujahul Daulah may now appear, I must suppose that he will join him also."

⁹ Cop. 1. 1766-67. No. 60.

¹⁰ Trans. R. 1767-68, Nos. 76, 76a, and 76b.

feelings of distrust towards the English, and promised to defend their dominions at all costs.¹¹

The Select Committee while formulating a comprehensive plan of defence¹² had to consider at the very outset whether the English troops should be sent beyond the Karamnasa immediately. By the second article of the late treaty executed with the King and the Vazir the English had engaged to assist them in repelling every attack upon their dominions with all their forces as far, however, as might be consistent with their own safety. It was noted by the Committee that under this last proviso the English troops could be confined within the limits of the Bihar frontier without breach of engagements. In fact, Clive in his parting letter to the Select Committee had expressly asked the members to fight the Abdali, when called upon to do so, "On this side the Soan, as near the Ganges as possible."¹³ Verelst, however, was opposed to such a cautious policy. He asked the Committee to consider what effect such a resolution might produce on the attitude of the allies, and what degree of strength the enemy might derive from "these allies inflamed with resentment at finding themselves deserted at so critical an occasion." He evidently believed not without reason that extreme caution and inactivity at this juncture might alienate the King and the Vazir, and force them to join the enemy. Eventually the Committee at its meeting held on February 23 rejected the "narrow and selfish policy" of confining the military operations within the limits of the Karamnasa, and decided to concentrate troops at Sheorajpur¹⁴ to convince the King and the Vazir of "the religious regard we have to treaties, and of our resolution to support our allies."¹⁵

¹¹ Trans. I. 1766-67, Nos. 48 and 55.

¹² Beng. Sel. Com. Feb. 23, 1767.

¹³ Beng. Sel. Com. Jan. 16, 1767.

¹⁴ "Near the confines of the Corah province" (Beng. Sel. Com. March 27, 1767).

¹⁵ Beng. Sel. Com. Feb. 23, 1767.

The following plan of operations was finally agreed upon by the Committee :—

1. The Commanding Officer of the Third Brigade was to be immediately ordered to despatch five battalions of sepoy's with six pieces to occupy the most convenient post at Sheorajpur.
2. The Second Brigade in case of the Abdali's advance was to be ordered to encamp on the most convenient ground between Mirzapur and Chunar.
3. The remainder of the Third Brigade was in that case to be ordered to proceed to Sheorajpur.
4. The First Brigade was to be simultaneously moved to Bankipur.
5. Only a battalion of sepoy's was to be left at Monghyr.
6. In case the Abdali advanced further, the Second Brigade was likewise to be ordered to march to Sheorajpur and join the Third Brigade.
7. Orders were at the same time to be issued for the First Brigade to march from Bankipur, and occupy the most convenient posts in the vicinity of the Karamnasa.
8. In case of attack on the allies the army at Sheorajpur was to be reinforced by the grenadiers of all the Brigades and the Pargana Battalions.
9. The First Brigade was not to be considerably weakened as it was to remain as a frontier guard to cover the provinces against the attack of any detachment from the enemy's main army.
10. Col. Smith was immediately to take charge of the army on the frontier and direct the aforesaid operations.

That there should be any delay in the enforcement of these

precautionary measures. the Committee resolved¹⁶ to write to Sir Robert Barker, " We think it advisable to form a camp at Serajapur in order to signify to our allies our determined resolution to protect them against every attempt on their dominions. You are therefore hereby directed to detach five battalions of sepoy's and six field pieces from the Third Brigade to occupy the lines at Serajapur; and we leave it to you either to take command of the detachment, or to remain with the Brigade as you shall think necessary to the service."

In the meanwhile, alarming news of the Abdali's progress began to reach Calcutta. Sir Robert Barker reported¹⁷ early in March that the Abdali had already written circular letters to the different chiefs directing them to wait on him with men and money on his approach to Delhi, and that the Vazir was anxious to know definitely what attitude the English were going to adopt towards the invader. Muniruddaulah, the King's minister, informed the Governor that all the powers of Hindustan had sent 'arzis' to the Abdali, and asked whether the King could be permitted to do the same.¹⁸ The Governor in consequence repeatedly advised the King and the Vazir not to write 'arzis' to the Abdali, or send him any " peshkash ". He assured Muniruddaulah, " When the enemy see us united and prepared for war, they will be afraid to make war upon us."¹⁹ In a subsequent letter²⁰ he again reminded the latter, " As the English are living under the shadow of His Majesty Shah Alam, and owe allegiance to no other King, the Shah will be afraid to demand money from us, or devastate our country. If, however, he is bent on doing mischief, the victorious English army will, according to the treaty, march immediately to defend the dominions of His Majesty and the Vazir." To the Vazir also the

¹⁶ Beng. Sel. Com. March 3, 1767.

¹⁷ Letter from Sir Robert Barker, March 12, 1767.

¹⁸ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 103.

¹⁹ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 73.

²⁰ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 88.

Governor similarly²¹ sent re-assuring letters in one of which he solemnly affirmed that as long as he remained alive, or there was a single Englishman left in India, the Vazir would not be denied assistance.

The Select Committee had at first thought that the English troops then available in Bengal were sufficient for the defence of the province, but Col. Smith took a serious view of the situation, and warned²² the Committee at their meeting of March 27, "We appear very formidable on paper, but it is incumbent on me to observe that the sepoy of the three brigades are only 18 battalions; that from this number we must furnish garrisons for Monghyr, Chunar, and Allahabad, and therefore the whole force of sepoy which I shall have for the service of the field will not exceed 15 battalions Our army is composed entirely of infantry and artillery and the enemy will have such a body of horse that if the Shah makes a proper use of them he may harass us beyond measure." Col. Smith accordingly proposed that an additional detachment should be promptly requisitioned from Madras for reinforcing the Bengal army.

Alarmed at such a grave warning, the Committee immediately wrote to the Madras authorities asking for a detachment of European troops.²³ It was also decided to sound the neighbouring powers like the Marathas, the Jats, and the Rohillas for the purpose of raising a united confederacy against the enemy, as Col. Smith urged, ". . . . all those who are not our friends must be our enemies." Letters were hastily despatched by the Governor to Raghu-nath Rao,²⁴ Hafiz Rahmat Khan,²⁵ Dundi Khan,²⁶ and others.

asking them to unite with the English against the Abdali. The Vazir was requested to send trusty agents to the Jat chief, Javahir Singh, and to the Rohillas with letters representing the urgent need of concerted action against the common enemy.²⁷

From the Vazir's correspondence with the Governor during this period it appears that he was not only not in favour of any alliance with the Rohillas, but he actually proposed hostilities against them. The Vazir had all along suspected that the Rohillas were anxious to join²⁸ the Shah, and when he found that they had already sent their 'vakils' to the latter, and had assumed a haughty attitude in their recent correspondence, he pressed for immediate punitive operations against them, lest they should all unite with the invader. The Vazir reminded²⁹ the Governor of the old adage, "The mouth of a spring may be stopped by a single needle, while the stream which may flow from it cannot be crossed on an elephant."

Verelst was, however, not inclined to allow the Vazir to be entangled in a campaign against the Rohillas at a time when the very safety of Bengal was threatened. He politely informed the Vazir that³⁰ a war with the Rohillas at the present moment was most inadvisable, for, in the first place, the Vazir's own troops were not adequate for the purpose, in the second place, such a venture should not be undertaken without concluding beforehand an alliance with the Marathas, in the third place, necessary assistance could not be afforded by the English as their troops might be engaged elsewhere, and in the last place, as Verelst pointed out, "Should we attack the Rohillas, they may prevail upon the Shah to invade His Excellency's territory from the

²⁷ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 94.

²⁸ Muniruddaulah also wrote, "The Rohilla Chiefs are making preparations to join the Shah." Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 164.

²⁹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 153.

³⁰ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 108. Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 110.

north, and as his army is not strong enough to oppose the Shah's, His Excellency's territory would be subjected to plunder and rapine."

The King's wavering attitude was another cause of worry to Verelst. At one time the former conferred³¹ with the Vazir about the measures of common defence, while at another time he was eager for coming to terms³² with the Shah. Once the King even suggested to Sir Robert Barker that the best thing for the English would be to leave Allahabad and fall back upon Patna.³³ This obliged the Governor to write a strongly worded note to the King on March 27 expressing his annoyance³⁴ at the presence of self-interested men in the Court, who advocated a policy of negotiation with the invader. He urged, "If he is not coming this way, negotiation is unnecessary, but if he is, he will not be satisfied until he gets a 'peshkash', and to offer gold to a man who wrongfully invades this country is equally dishonourable for His Majesty and his faithful allies, the English."³⁵

Verelst had so far hoped that the Shah had no real intention to march against Bengal, but when it was reported by Najibuddaulah that the Abdali meant to stay³⁶ two or three years in Hindustan, the Select Committee could no longer ignore the danger of war. At their meeting held on March 27, the Committee agreed,³⁷ on the recommendation of Col. Smith, to order the Second Brigade to march at once to Allahabad. The European soldiers were, however, to re-

³¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 137.

³² Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 141.

³³ Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 8.

³⁴ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 102.

³⁵ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 103.

³⁶ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 140A. Shah Vali Khan also wrote to Jagat Ray, "It is the determination of the Shah this year to make a stay of some duration in Hindustan and undertake the regulation of the country." (Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 35.)

³⁷ Beng. Sel. Com. March 27, 1767.

main encamped on the banks of the Jumna or the Ganges during the approaching hot weather, instead of proceeding to Sheorajpur. The First Brigade was also directed to march to Bankipur. The Committee, it is interesting to note, resolved also to authorize Col. Smith to raise "a body of Mogul horse." The Governor was asked to urge upon the King and the Vazir the necessity of an urgent increase in the strength of their own cavalry. Verelst, it may be pointed out, had already informally advised the Vazir to raise the number of his cavalry in a letter,³⁸ dated March 24, which runs as follows, "Notwithstanding the superiority which discipline gives them (the English), as the English forces consist entirely of infantry, and those of the Shah entirely of cavalry, a great disadvantage is liable to arise, for it would be impossible to pursue the enemy after they are defeated. It is therefore necessary that His Excellency should raise a formidable body of cavalry."³⁹

From the detailed instructions given by the Select Committee to Col. Smith on the eve of the latter's departure for Allahabad, an idea can be formed of the various considerations which actuated the frontier policy of the English during this period. In the first place, the Select Committee had decided to form an advanced outpost at Sheorajpur, and had ordered the Second Brigade to march to Allahabad primarily to deter the invader from advancing towards Bengal by a show of force. In the second place, the Committee desired to form "a league and general confederacy" of the country powers like the Marathas, the Rohillas, and the Jats as a precautionary measure.⁴⁰ In the third place, the Committee did

³⁸ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 94.

³⁹ Apparently in accordance with this advice the Vazir levied twelve thousand horse "upon a better footing than is generally practised in Hindostan." Dow, *History of Hindustan*, II, p. 357.

⁴⁰ The Vazir had urged the necessity of a confederacy in the following words, "We may stop the current while it is small, but when increased by many rivers the torrent must force all opposition." (Beng. Sel. Com. March 24, 1767).

not like to send the English troops beyond Sheorajpur, for "to proceed further would only be extending the frontier we are to defend, which we have already enlarged." In the fourth place, the Committee chose to expedite the movement of its own troops beyond the Karamnasa, as it refused to rely on "the feeble assistance" of the King and the Vazir. In the fifth place, the Committee was determined to prevent the Vazir from moving towards the Rohilla country, lest the latter's advance should precipitate a rupture with the Abdali. In the sixth place, the Committee would not allow the King to fall into the hands of the Shah, and sought to prevent his escape from Allahabad by all possible means. Col. Smith was thus particularly instructed, "We earnestly recommend that you will keep the strictest eye upon the conduct of His Majesty." Lastly, the Committee was reluctant to order the First Brigade to march beyond the Karamnasa, lest the safety of Bengal should be jeopardised thereby.

Early in April Muqim Beg, an Afghan envoy, was reported⁴¹ by a Rohilla chief to be coming with letters for Clive⁴² from the Abdali and his minister Shah Vali Khan. On April 8, the letters were received by Verelst. The Shah's letter was, as the Select Committee informed the Madras government, "couched in dark and ambiguous, but rather minatory terms."⁴³ The Abdali pointed out in the course of his letter⁴⁴ that God had granted him great fortune, that the people of Hindustan had paid him homage, and that great and small everywhere obeyed his high commands. He was therefore surprised that no 'arzi' had been sent to him from Calcutta. If the Governor had any desire to tender his services to him, he should do so, and if he had

⁴¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 186.

⁴² Evidently the Abdali was not aware of Clive's departure from Bengal.

⁴³ Beng. Sel. Com., April 30, 1767.

⁴⁴ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 187.

no such desire, he should represent that also, so that "right being separated from wrong" he might fully understand "the true state of things." Verelst sent an equally diplomatic reply reminding the Shah that the English were so strong that they had nothing to apprehend for themselves, but they would always tender their services in everything whereby the glory of the Shah, the welfare of their lawful sovereign and the tranquillity of the Empire might be advanced.⁴⁵ Verelst could easily adopt a strong attitude, as by this time news had been received that the Abdali was about to go back⁴⁶ to his country. It was reported⁴⁷ at this time by Shitab Rai and Sir Robert Barker that Najibuddaulah had settled the 'peshkash' for the Abdali at 25 lakhs of rupees to be subscribed by the various chiefs, although, as Sir Robert Barker wrote, ". . . not a cowry is demanded either from the King, Shujah, or any other Surdars under our protection."

The news of the Abdali's departure was soon found to be incorrect, as the latter continued his operations against the Sikhs till the end of summer. In May, Najibuddaulah informed⁴⁸ the King that the Abdali had resolved to postpone his departure in order to punish his enemies, and requested him therefore to send whatever money he could spare to the Shah. The Vazir was also similarly asked by Najibuddaulah to offer his 'peshkash' without delay. Under instructions from the Governor, both the King and the Vazir expressed their inability to send any money on the plea⁴⁹ of "straitened circumstances." The King wrote to Najibuddaulah that his annual receipts did not exceed forty lakhs of rupees, and his expenses were no less than sixty-

⁴⁵ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 127.

⁴⁶ Letter from Sir Robert Barker to Col. Smith, March 25, 1767.

⁴⁷ Beng. Sel. Com. April 9, 1767. Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 183. Letter from Sel. Com. to Court, April 19, 1767.

⁴⁸ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 251.

⁴⁹ Trans. R. 1767-68, Nos. 252, 253.

five lakhs of rupees, hence, he added, he was ashamed to confess his inability to spare any money for the Shah. The Vazir too sent a similar reply on the plea of his various "financial troubles and other misfortunes." Repeated demands of money from Najibuddaulah made the Vazir extremely nervous, and early in June he wrote a frantic letter to the Governor praying for protection as well as a definite plan of action against the Shah. He lamented that his own army was weak and ill-equipped, and that he had no fortress or asylum where he could send his family in times of danger.⁵⁰ His serious illness⁵¹ during the rains aggravated his growing anxiety, but fortunately the danger from the Abdali disappeared in September, when the latter left⁵² India after prolonged and futile operations against the Sikhs.⁵³

During the period of the Abdali's stay in India the chief cause of alarm and anxiety to Verelst was the alleged intrigue of Mir Qasim with the invader. It was openly talked about that the Abdali had invaded India at Mir Qasim's invitation, and that the latter's 'vakils' were constantly in attendance⁵⁴ upon the Shah. Verelst therefore endeavoured to have Mir Qasim captured. In fact, Clive too had announced a reward for his arrest.⁵⁵ The Vazir was asked by Verelst more than once to seize "that troublous fellow Mir Qasim"⁵⁶ in any way possible. At first the Vazir had agreed to cooperate in the capture of "that villain Qasim,"⁵⁷ but later on he probably realized that it was impossible to seize him without provoking the Shah and the Rohillas, and

⁵⁰ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 269.

⁵¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 313. Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 182.

⁵² Trans. R. 1767-68, Nos. 313, 368.

⁵³ Vide Sir J. N. Sarkar's *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, pp. 496-501.

⁵⁴ Mir Qasim's wakil presented 'arzis' to the Shah and his minister regularly once in the week. (Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 76C.)

⁵⁵ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 52.

⁵⁶ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 20. Trans I. 1766-67, No. 48.

⁵⁷ Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 29.

confessed his inability to employ his own troops for this purpose on the plea that "it would be considered in an evil light by the world."⁵⁸ Early in March it was reported that Mir Qasim's 'vakil' had offered ten lakhs of rupees to the Shah on behalf of his master,⁵⁹ and towards the end of the month, Dundi Khan, a Rohilla, rather imperiously demanded a fixed allowance for Mir Qasim's maintenance, threatening trouble for Bengal, if the matter was not speedily settled.⁶⁰ In April, the Governor was informed by Muniruddaulah that "that pest of mankind," Mir Qasim, was now with the Shah, and was 'hatching schemes'⁶¹ to overthrow the empire of Hindustan ! In May, the Vazir informed the Governor that a 'vakil' of Mir Qasim was now on his way to the Shah's army to negotiate matters for his master.⁶²

All attempts of the fugitive Nawab to secure the Shah's support failed in the end, and the danger to Bengal from his machinations thus disappeared. The Abdali eventually set his face against his overtures, and rudely dismissed⁶³ his 'vakil' before his departure from India. Though the Abdali's invasion had been primarily prompted by the desire for plunder, it was without doubt undertaken with the ostensible object of punishing the infidels like the Sikhs, the Jats, and particularly the English who were represented to have overthrown a Muslim ruler of Bengal. It is, however, easy to account for his ultimate abandonment of Mir Qasim's cause. In the first place, the Shah found on his appearance in India that the Sikhs had grown too formidable and troublesome to be easily subdued ; while without subduing them thoroughly it was obviously not safe for him to leave the Punjab and undertake a distant expedition. In

⁵⁸ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 117.

⁵⁹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 141.

⁶⁰ Abs. R. 1767-71 p. 4.

⁶¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 164.

⁶² Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 254.

⁶³ Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 23.

the second place, the Abdali had been led to expect that the Vazir, the most powerful Muslim prince in Hindustan, would join him in a crusade against the English, but he was disappointed at the latter's refusal to break with the English. In the third place, being hard pressed for money himself, Mir Qasim was not in a position to render sufficient financial help to the Shah. In the fourth place, the Abdali received a poor response from other princes as well, and the total amount of 'peshkash' offered to him was barely sufficient for the maintenance of his big army. In the fifth place, the Abdali was further deterred from his purpose by his anticipation of a powerful confederacy against himself. Lastly, the Shah appears also to have been so disgusted with Mir Qasim's artful declarations that he once actually called him a 'liar'! Evidently, the Shah was not prepared to be befooled into a hazardous enterprise without dependable allies, or a reasonable prospect of success.

It is easy to ridicule⁶⁴ the hasty preparations that Verelst and the Select Committee had considered necessary on the approach of the Abdali. It must not, however, be forgotten that if the latter had succeeded in his efforts to gain the alliance of the country powers, it is doubtful whether he would have refused to espouse the cause of "an oppressed, fugitive, and homeless" Nawab in furtherance of his own ulterior designs of conquest and plunder. Verelst was thus hardly unjustified in taking prompt and forward measures in view of the alleged secret alliance between the Shah and Mir Qasim.

Ahmad Shah invaded India once again during Verelst's regime in the winter of 1768-69, as is clear from the contemporary English records. There is no mention of this invasion in Persian chronicles.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Clive wrote to Verelst from England on Nov. 7, 1767, "The sooner you confine the whole of our force within the boundary of the Caramnassa the better. The Abdally's invasion of Bengal must be a mere bugbear. So long a march is next to impossible; therefore I think he will never attempt it."

⁶⁵ Vide Sarkar's *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, p. 496.

The earliest information of the Abdali's decision to invade India during the coming winter was received by the Governor in July, 1768.⁶⁶ Sir Robert Barker sent from Allahabad a paper of intelligence, containing the ominous report, "The Shaw promises to march towards Hindustan at the commencement of the cold season."⁶⁷ On October 24, the members of the deputation to the King and the Vazir reported in their letter to the Governor that⁶⁸ the Abdali was again invading India, and had actually arrived on the banks of the Attock. The details of the Shāh's further progress are not available, but from the Select Committee Proceedings it appears that on February 25, 1769, Col. Smith reported from Fyzabad, "I learn that the Abdalla has arrived at Lahore."⁶⁹

This invasion does not seem to have caused that degree of anxiety which the previous expedition had done. Apparently, the Governor knew that after his experience in 1767 the Abdali would not seriously think of going beyond the Punjab. This is why Verelst not only took no serious notice of the Abdali's movements on this occasion, but he wrote to Col. Smith on March 14 asking him to inform the Vazir that no heed should be paid to the approach of the Shah, unless the safety of Oudh was actually threatened.⁷⁰ Verelst, however, subsequently directed⁷¹ Col. Smith to procure the earliest intelligence of the Abdali's "motions and designs," when he was informed by Col. Smith that the Abdali was said to be encamped on the banks of the Chenab.⁷²

As foreseen by the Governor, Ahmad Shah remained busy in the Punjab during the short period that he was in India. In fact, it appears that he could not go beyond the

⁶⁶ Beng. Sel. Com. July 20, 1768.

⁶⁷ Letter from Sir Robert Barker, June 7, 1768.

⁶⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., November 3, 1768.

⁶⁹ Beng. Sel. Com. March 14, 1769.

⁷⁰ Sel. Com. to Col. R. Smith, March 14, 1769.

⁷¹ Beng. Sel. Com., March 21, 1769.

⁷² Letter from Col. R. Smith, March 9, 1769.

Jhelum.⁷³ Dissensions among his followers⁷⁴ and the mutiny of a part of his army compelled him to go back⁷⁵ to his country in a miserable plight.⁷⁶ Early in April, Verelst was relieved to hear from Col. Smith, "The Abdalla appears to be upon his route back towards the Attock . . . the danger is over for this season."⁷⁷ It is interesting to note that the Vazir who had at first been mistrustful of the Abdali exulted at the latter's precipitous retirement, and wrote to the Governor with ill-concealed glee, "The Shah Abdallah has made an inglorious retreat."⁷⁸ This was the last of the Abdali invasions in India. The prolonged fight with the militant Sikhs without any support from the country powers must have at last convinced the war-worn invader of the futility of any further campaigning in this country.

Notwithstanding the eventual disappearance of the Abdali menace, Verelst considered it necessary to safeguard the western frontier of Bengal in the interests of permanent security. He considered Allahabad to be "the key of the surrounding territories,"⁷⁹ and was reluctant to withdraw the English troops from that place, although the Directors continued to insist on this. In 1768, they peremptorily ordered the recall of all troops from Allahabad, and reminded the Governor and the Select Committee, "As all our views and expectations are confined within the Caramnasa, we are

⁷³ Cop. R. 1769, No. 53.

⁷⁴ Beng. Sel. Com. April 21, 1769.

⁷⁵ Verelst to Sel. Com., December 16, 1769.

⁷⁶ Trans. R. 1769, No. 98.

⁷⁷ Letter from Col. R. Smith, March 19, 1769.

⁷⁸ Beng. Sel. Com. May 19, 1769. Cop. R. 1769, No. 16.

⁷⁹ Letter to Court, March 28, 1768. "Its situation makes it, in some measure, the key of the surrounding territories; and its vicinity to the several countries of Shuja-u-doula, the Rohillas, Jats. and Mahrattas, enables us to penetrate their views with more certainty; and in case of necessity, to enter any part with our army in ten or fifteen days, where we can have either an ally to support, or an enemy to punish. It is for these reasons, we have been obliged to retain a brigade out of the provinces."

impatient to hear our troops are recalled from Allahabad."⁸⁰ Verelst, however, put forward sound reasons⁸¹ for making Allahabad an advanced outpost for the defence of Bengal. Firstly, he considered the English troops at Allahabad to be a necessary check on the Vazir. Secondly, for the protection of the King too it was equally necessary to station a strong force with him. Thirdly, it was essential to maintain an army at Allahabad for guarding against unforeseen irruptions and dangers. Fourthly, from Allahabad the English troops could easily make a diversion against the Marathas whenever necessary for the support of Madras. Fifthly, to enforce the recent treaty with the Vazir it was advisable to keep a force at Allahabad as a precautionary measure. Lastly, the retention of an army at Allahabad was also necessary for holding, in Verelst's own words, "the general balance of Hindustan."⁸²

Chunar was the next strategic point which Verelst deemed it essential to control for the immediate safety of Bengal. It commanded the main entrance into this province from the north-west, hence a strong English garrison was kept in the Chunar fort throughout Verelst's regime in spite of the Vazir's persistent opposition.⁸³ The Vazir strongly objected to the occupation of the fort by the Company's troops on four grounds.⁸⁴ In the first place, he urged that he had originally agreed in Clive's time to allow only two English '*pahras*' at the fort for guarding the Company's grain stored in it, and that as the grain was no longer there the '*pahras*' should now be recalled. In the second place, he reminded the Governor of the assurance given by the members of the deputation to him that the garrison would be withdrawn along with the other English troops in Oudh after the danger from the Abdali was over, and complained, "At present the troops have been

⁸⁰ Letter from Court, March 16, 1768.

⁸¹ Letter to Court, April 6, 1769.

⁸² Letter to Court, March 28, 1768.

⁸³ Cop. R. 1769, No. 64.

⁸⁴ Trans. R. 1769, No. 107.

recalled, but the 'pahras' are still there as before." In the third place, he protested against the gradual increase⁸⁵ of the English garrison, and represented, "Formerly there were two 'pahras' at Chunargarh, now two companies have been stationed there." Lastly, he complained that on account of the presence of the English troops great disorder prevailed there. On August 16, 1769, Verelst wrote a long letter⁸⁶ to the Vazir, dilating on the necessity of keeping the English garrison at Chunar so long as two battalions continued to stay at Allahabad in deference to the repeated demands of the King. The Governor diplomatically pointed out that when the interests of the two parties were common, the retention of a few men in the fort under pressure of necessity should not displease His Excellency, and interrupt the goodwill subsisting between him and the English.

Verelst valued⁸⁷ Chunar not only for its obvious strategic importance, but also for the fact that the fort was "a necessary pledge" of the Vazir's fidelity.⁸⁸ The garrison at Chunar was considerably reinforced during 1767-68,⁸⁹ when there was a grave misunderstanding with the Vazir owing to the sudden increase of his army. Verelst, however, never insisted on the total exclusion of the Vazir's men from the fort, lest it should provoke an open estrangement with the Vazir. For this negligence the Governor and the Select Committee were censured by the Directors in their general letter of November 11, 1768.⁹⁰ The Directors wrote. "We cannot omit expressing our displeasure that you should have relaxed from that necessary precaution so strongly recommended by Lord Clive of garrisoning Chunargarh by suffering Suja Dowla to

⁸⁵ *Vide* also letter from Capt. G. Harper to Col. R. Smith, July 10, 1769, on the subject of the Vazir's complaint regarding the increase of the garrison. (Beng. Sel. Com., August 3, 1769.)

⁸⁶ Cop. I. 1769-70, No. 58.

⁸⁷ Beng. Sel. Com. Feb. 5, 1767.

⁸⁸ Sel. Com. to Court Feb. 19, 1767.

⁸⁹ Beng. Sel. Com. Nov. 17, Dec. 11, 1767, March 2, August 10 1768.

⁹⁰ Letter from Court, Nov. 11, 1768.

introduce troops sufficient to have possessed himself of the place."⁹¹ It may here be pointed out in fairness to Verelst that the Directors unknowingly exaggerated his negligence, for with the increase of the English garrison an effective command of the fort had already been secured.⁹² The small contingent belonging to the Vazir was hardly a source of danger, and was allowed to remain merely out of regard for the latter's wounded vanity.

While engaged in providing for the defence of Bengal against "unforeseen dangers and sudden irruptions," Verelst found that the Company's military establishment needed considerable reinforcement.⁹³ He asked the Directors in vain to sanction at least the strength proposed by Clive.⁹⁴ He pressed also for a substantial increase of the cavalry in view of the danger from the Abdali, and authorized the recruitment of four regiments of horse, as Col. Smith had more than once represented to the Select Committee, "You have only three hundred horse in your pay, a number by no means sufficient"⁹⁵ The Directors, however, paid no heed to such representations, and expressed their displeasure at the increase of military expenditure. Verelst wanted to improve the Parganah battalions which he considered "scarce half-armed,"⁹⁶ but even in this he received no support from the Directors.

Verelst's frontier policy was in fact founded on the basic principle of balance of power. While he was opposed to the

⁹¹ For Clive's opinion, *vide* his farewell minute (Beng. Sel. Com. Jan. 16, 1767). Clive had thus advised the Committee, "As the possession of a fort will most effectually secure us against treachery, we must never fail to insist upon it in the most strong and positive terms."

⁹² Messrs Cartier, Smith, and Russell wrote from Allahabad on January 7, 1769, ". . . in the present situation of affairs, we are in fact equally masters of both places (i.e., Chunar and Allahabad)"

⁹³ Sel. Com. to Court, April 10, 1767.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* "Complete your military establishment in the manner proposed by Lord Clive."

⁹⁵ Sel. Com. to Court, April 10, 1768.

⁹⁶ Sel. Com. to Court, April 10, 1767.

extension of the frontier "beyond the circle of the Nabob's dominions," he was not in favour of remaining an unconcerned spectator of any serious political turmoils in Hindustan. He rightly believed that security lay not in a policy of isolation, or inactivity, but in the maintenance of a balance of power among the neighbouring powers. He pointed out to the Directors soon after his assumption of office, "Policy requires we should hold ourselves in constant readiness to oppose every attempt to destroy that equality and balance of power among the princes of the empire, in which consists our greatest security."⁹⁷ Verelst held that it was easy "to hold the general balance of Hindustan" on account of the weakness no less than "the discordancy of the principles, views, and interests of the neighbouring powers."⁹⁸

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Letter to Court, March 28, 1768.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST ENGLISH EXPEDITION TO NEPAL

The first English expedition to Nepal has been ignored by historians so far, and it has consequently been one of the least known episodes in the annals of British rule in India. It was in Verelst's time that this expedition was planned, and undertaken, and unsuccessfully though it terminated, it marks an epoch in the history of the early relations of the English with the Gurkha power.

Early in 1767, Jayaprakash Malla,¹ the Newar ruler of Kathmandu, while closely besieged in his capital by the Gurkha chief, Prithvi Narayan, made repeated requests² to the English for aid against his enemy. Mr. Rumbold, Chief of the Patna Factory, on being informed of "these repeated solicitations,"³ wrote to the Governor on April 20, "Napaul . . . has long been besieged by the Goorcully Rajah. The inhabitants are now drove to the utmost extremeties, repeated solicitations have been made for our assistance, and I am informed a Vakeel is now on his way hither . . . I shall be glad to know from you whether on the Vakeel's arrival I may

¹ According to Kirkpatrick (*vide* his "Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul." 1811, p. 270), it was Ranjit Malla of Bhatgaon, who applied for assistance, and "prevailed on the British Government to aid him with a military force for the purpose of expelling" the Gurkhas. From the official papers it is, however, clear that the appeal for help came from Jayaprakash Malla, the ruler of Kathmandu, and Capt. Kinloch was sent expressly to relieve him, and not Ranjit Malla, as stated by Kirkpatrick. It appears from the narrative of Father Guisepee (who was an eye-witness of the Gurkha conquest of Nepal) that the Raja of Bhatgaon had originally invited the Gurkha chief into Nepal, but he subsequently concluded an alliance with the Rajas of Kathmandu and Patan in order to drive out the Gurkhas (*vide* "Asiatic Researches", Vol. II).

² For an account of his career, *vide* "History of Nepal" (Translated from Parbatiya), edited by D. Wright, p. 223.

³ Letter from Mr. Golding to Mr. T. Rumbold, dated Bettiah April 6, 1767.

give him any encouragement."⁴ This was the first official intimation received by the Governor about the Newar ruler's entreaties for assistance, and the Select Committee at its meeting of April 30 forthwith resolved to send an expedition to Nepal for the relief of Kathmandu, in case Prithvi Narayan refused to accept English mediation.⁵ Mr. Rumbold was directed to write to the Gurkha chief that unless he immediately raised the siege, withdrew his troops from Nepal, and desisted from molesting Jayaprakash Malla with whom the Company was on terms of amity, the English would treat him "as a declared enemy."⁶ The Committee further authorized the Governor to order Capt. Kinloch "to march with all expedition" from Tippera⁷ to Patna "for establishing the peace and tranquillity of the country of Nepaul." Mr. Rumbold was at the same time informed, "Should Captain Kinloch arrive too late for the purpose required, we then leave it to your discretion to afford such succours as can be spared from the duties of the Factory and Collections."

The primary consideration which led the Governor and the Select Committee to espouse the cause of the Newars was economic. The prosperous trans-Himalyan trade of Bengal and Bihar had lately come almost to a standstill⁸ with the recent Gurkha conquest of the submontane regions of Nepal, and it was naturally apprehended that if Prithvi Narayan was allowed to conquer the whole of Nepal, Bengal would be totally deprived of the benefits of a lucrative trade with the latter country as well as Tibet.⁹ The importance of this trade

⁴ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, April 20, 1767.

⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., April 30, 1767.

⁶ Letter from Sel. Com. to Mr. T. Rumbold, April 30, 1767.

⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., April 30, 1767, Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 5, 1767. Capt. Kinloch had lately been sent on an expedition against the Raja of Tippera.

⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., April 30, 1767. Mr. Rumbold wrote to the Governor, "The trade from Nepaul which formerly was very considerable has been entirely stopped by these troubles."

⁹ Kirkpatrick wrote in his "Memorandum respecting the commerce

would be apparent from the fact that Bengal exported¹⁰ to Nepal and Tibet large quantities of cotton, silk, and woollen goods as also salt and such other necessities, while it imported a variety of rare articles like musk, cowtails, rock-oil, elephants' teeth, cassia, medicinal woods, catch, honey, wax, borax, and birds.¹¹ The most valuable imports¹² were, however, gold and timber. The Company derived a plentiful supply of large timber¹³ from the forests of Nepal Tarai, while gold was another commodity for which Bengal largely depended on that country.¹⁴ In fact, as Nepal annually exported an immense amount of gold,¹⁵ it was popularly believed in India that this country was full of valuable gold-mines.¹⁶

Verelst and the Select Committee thus readily consented to befriend the Newar prince for "opening a free communication"¹⁷ with Nepal, and for promoting "a free intercourse and uninterrupted trade"¹⁸ with that country. The various

of Nepal," "There is good reason to believe, that could a free and secure communication be opened between Bengal and Tibet, the woollen staples of Great Britain might be disposed of to the inhabitants of the latter country."

¹⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons. Oct. 31, 1769 (vide Mr. James Logan's *Memorandum*). Bogle, *Memorandum on the Trade of Tibet*. Stavorinus, *Voyage to the East Indies*, I, p. 391.

¹¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 152.

¹² Letter from Sel. Com. to Court, Sept. 26, 1767.

¹³ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 19, and Oct. 7, 1766, March 3, 1767, etc. Rennell's *Journals*, p. 69.

¹⁴ Fourth Report, 1773, p. 528.

Beng. Pub. Cons., Oct. 31, 1769. "The common current value of gold in Nepal (brought there from Thibet) is said to be 50 p.c. less than it is at Patna."

¹⁵ Letter from Clive to the Honourable Committee of Treasury, and Correspondence, Aug. 28, 1767.

¹⁶ Siyar (Lucknow Text), p. 717.

Muzaffar-Namah (Alld. Univ. Ms.), p. 334.

Tarikh-i-Muzaffari (Alld. Univ. Ms.), p. 781.

Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S., V, p. 608).

¹⁷ Letter from Sel. Com. to Mr. T. Rumbold, April 30, 1767.

¹⁸ Letter from Sel. Com. to Col. R. Smith, April 30, 1767.

reasons put forward in justification of this decision may be thus summarized. In the first place,¹⁹ it was considered imprudent to lose the trade with Nepal and Tibet at a time when the external commerce of Bengal was in a state of decline. In the second place,²⁰ the supply of gold from Nepal was expected to be particularly beneficial during the existing scarcity of the current specie in Bengal. In the third place,²¹ the trade with Nepal was likely to be of value in the provision of the annual China Investment. In the fourth place,²² the economic welfare of Bettiah which bordered on Nepal was bound to be ruined, if the free communication with Nepal was long interrupted. In the last place,²³ it was hoped that an uninterrupted trade with Nepal would "probably contribute much to the riches and welfare of this country."

In addition to the purely commercial considerations,²⁴ the necessity of frontier regulation in Bettiah was an additional factor which made it imperative on the part of the English to take early steps against the recurrent Gurkha incursions²⁵ from the adjacent Tarai. Since his recent conquest of Makwanpur, Prithvi Narayan had laid claims to the villages lying on the borderland of Nepal. He had frequently threatened a forcible occupation of these villages, and it was apprehended²⁶ that he might carry out his threat after his final conquest of Nepal. Thus, the interests of self-defence demanded a counter-offensive against the Gurkhas in support of the friendly Newar princes.

At first Verelst had hoped that the relief of Kathmandu might be secured by peaceful negotiations with the Gurkha

¹⁹ Letter from Sel. Com. to Mr. T. Rumbold. July 21, 1767.

²⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., July 21, 1767.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Letter from Sel. Com. to Court, Sept. 25, 1767.

²³ Beng. Sel. Com., April 30, 1767.

²⁴ Letter from Sel. Com. to Court, Sept. 25, 1767.

²⁵ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, Jan. 3, 1768.

²⁶ Letter from Mr. Golding to Mr. T. Rumbold, April 6, 1767.

Chief. This is why Mr. Rumbold was advised to mediate between the warring parties, and was informed²⁷ by the Governor. "We are entirely of your opinion that a lucrative branch of trade may be carried on by opening a free communication with Napaul, but we had rather see this effected and the Rajah relieved through our mediation than by force of arms." This shows that Verelst was reluctant to sanction a military expedition needlessly, and was eager for a peaceful settlement with the Gurkhas. In compliance with the instructions of the Governor, Mr. Rumbold sent a letter²⁸ to Prithvi Narayan requesting him to accept the Company's mediation in his dispute with the Newars. No reply was, however, received from the latter for a long time, and when at last it came, it was considered unsatisfactory.

Meanwhile Muktar Umda²⁹ and Fakir Ramdas, Vakils of Jayaprakash Malla, had arrived at Patna, and both Mr. Rumbold³⁰ and Capt. Kinloch³¹ were deeply moved by their piteous appeals for help. The statement of the Vakils, recorded³² by Capt. Kinloch for the information of the Governor and the Select Committee, runs as follows. "They say that Jay Percass engaged in a war with Petenarain, the Raja of Goorkha, about five years ago, since which the said Goorkha Rajah has taken ten principal cities and possession of all his country, having now only the towns of Cutmandoo, his own residence, Patan, Baudgon, and Zeemy all closely blockaded That the number of families and vast consumption of grain which is now brought him with great difficulty and danger, and in very small quantities, must in a very short time

²⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., April 30, 1767.

²⁸ On May 28.

²⁹ In the Proceedings the name is peculiarly spelt as "Mucktan Umda." It must, however, be "Mucktar Umda." In the Presslist, it is "Muktananda."

³⁰ Letter from Mr. Rumbold, July 6, 1767.

³¹ Letter from Capt. Kinloch, July 4, 1767.

³² Narrative taken by Capt. G. Kinloch from the Vakils, June, 1767. (The day of the month is not noted in the Minutes.)

reduce him to the necessity of opening his gates With regard to the forces of Goorkwallah they say his whole army may be about 50,000 men, but a great part of them are employed in the defence³³ of his own country and never more than 20,000 have been in Napaul,³⁴ they are chiefly armed with bows and arrows, swords and matchlocks, that this being the season for sowing their corn, they are all about that, except just what are necessary to keep up the blockade . . . They offer to carry the party safe to Napaul a march there will be attended with much greater difficulty towards the end of the monsoon as the rains cause an immense growth of jungle which almost choaks up the road. That if the expedition is delayed till the rains are over, the whole country will undoubtedly be in possession of Ghoorkwallah, which certainly would have been the case long e're now, had not the report of English assistance kept the Napaul Rajah's people in spirits many have already joined him (the conqueror) the four cities are so closely beset they must soon be reduced to any terms by famine."

At their meeting of July 21, the Select Committee at last resolved³⁵ to sanction the proposed expedition to Nepal, not only because the Gurkha chief had failed "to accept our mediation, or reply to Mr. Rumbold's letter on the subject," but also because the Committee apprehended that the Raja of Kathmandu would be forced to surrender to the enemy, if prompt assistance were not afforded to him. Letters recently received from the Christian missionaries in Nepal had already confirmed the accounts of the acute distress in Kathmandu, given by the Vakils of Jayaprakash Malla, and there remained no doubt about the desperate position of the Newar prince

³³ Against probably the 24 Rajas including the Raja of Lamjung who fought against the Gurkhas.

³⁴ From genealogical records of Nepal it does not appear that Prithvi Narayan could possess such a large army. (*Vide S. V. Gewali's Life of Prithvi Narayan Shah*, in Nepali, p. 148.)

³⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., July 21, 1767.

who, according to the missionaries,³⁶ could not be expected to hold out longer than the beginning of October, "if not relieved." It may be pointed out that Verelst ultimately approved of the proposed expedition on the representation of Messrs Rumbold and Kinloch that "the expedition to Napaul may be undertaken with great security as well as the utmost prospect of success."³⁷ But for their optimistic reports, it is doubtful if the Governor and the Committee would have sanctioned a perilous expedition out of Bengal. That they were fully conscious of the grave risks of such an enterprise is apparent from the instructions they gave to Mr. Rumbold. They wrote³⁸ to the latter, "We must positively insist upon your relinquishing the design unless you have the fullest conviction it must be attended with success. Should Captain Kinloch find in the progress of his march that the Rajah hath been forced to submission and that the enemy are in possession of his country, you will in such case direct him not to proceed, but take post in some convenient and secure station in the Bettea province . . . The same step he will pursue should he encounter unexpected difficulties from the season, the situation of the country, or the power of the enemy."

From the contemporary records, it is clear that Messrs Rumbold and Kinloch had underestimated the difficulties that must be encountered in a march to an unknown mountainous country like Nepal. They had doubtless been misled by the artful promises and high hopes held out by the Nepalese Vakils. Mr. Rumbold subsequently admitted this in a letter to the Governor, "I am convinced," he wrote on December 19, "the Facquir³⁹ was strongly attached to the interest of his master, but I have reason to imagine his zeal led him to give us too favourable an account of the ease with which troops might enter the Napaul country, and when once embarked in

³⁶ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, Dec. 19, 1767.

The reference is to be Capuchin monks.

³⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., July 21, 1767.

³⁸ Letter to Mr. T. Rumbold, July 21, 1767.

³⁹ Fakir Ramdas, one of the Nepalese Vakils.

the expedition, he gave every flattering hope to Captain Kinloch of soon overcoming those difficulties which appeared through the progress of the March."⁴⁰ In his apparent anxiety to expedite the march of the troops before the rains⁴¹ were over, Mr. Rumbold did not make sufficient and independent inquiries about the proposed route, nor did he take adequate steps to ensure a regular supply of provisions to the troops⁴² on the way. The expedition was thus commenced in undue haste.

From the following abstract account⁴³ of the stages from Patna to Nepal,⁴⁴ an idea of the difficult nature of the route, and of the uncertainty of the supply of provisions can be easily formed :—

" From Patna to Hodgepore	3	coss	
" Hodgepore to Durbunga	22	"	Provisions
" Durbunga to Bawah	7	"	available.
" Bawah to Jaunnipore	12	"	
" Jaunnipore to Jelandbass	6	"	No provision available.
" Jelandbass to Rannybassa	9	"	do. do.
" Rannybassa to Siddley	9	"	do. do.
" Siddley to Kurcoati	6	"	do. do.
" Kurcoati to Jungajulee	6	"	do. do.
" Jungajulee to Daupchah	10	"	(The Rajah will supply
" Daupchah to Ponautee	6	"	the troops with provisions at Daupchah.)"

⁴⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., Jan. 12, 1768.

⁴¹ Capt. Kinloch informed the Governor, "What seems most against him (the Napaul Rajah) at present is that the rains will make no material difference in the affairs of Goorkwallah, his different lines of circumvallation being of chains of small forts on redouts round the places blockaded within which there are commodious houses for his people" (Letter from Capt. G. Kinloch, July 4, 1767.)

⁴² The exact strength of the detachment with Capt. Kinloch is not given in the Select Committee Proceedings but from a letter written by Mr. Richard Barwell to his father, dated Feb. 28, 1768, it appears that the force consisted of 2400 sepoy. (*Vide* "The letters of Mr. Richard Barwell," *Bengal: Past and Present*, Vol. X, p. 29).

⁴³ Beng. Sel. Com., July 21, 1767.

⁴⁴ "The common road to Nepal . . . lies through the Kingdom of Macwanpur, but the missionaries and many other persons enter it on the Bettia quarter."

Because of the rainy season,⁴⁵ the troops had to undergo endless troubles throughout the way. The roads were extremely bad, and Capt. Kinloch had the greatest difficulty in leading his men through the dense jungles of the Tarai. His difficulty was aggravated by the scarcity of provisions. In spite of these obstacles, however, he resolutely pushed on towards Sindhuli along the banks of the Kamala. His progress was unduly delayed on account of the shortage of provisions. In fact, all other difficulties would have been easily surmounted, had provisions been regularly supplied to the troops, but the Vakils who escorted the troops failed to procure grain in sufficient quantities, and the sepoys had frequently to starve. The hillmen were slow in bringing in grain ; and as on one occasion a few stragglers had been attacked by the Gurkhas, there was such a panic among the coolies and camp-followers that "not a man would move unless escorted by a sufficient force."⁴⁶ The coolies employed for carrying grain sometimes made off in the night leaving all the baggage uncared for. Thus for want of coolies and provisions, Capt. Kinloch had to make frequent and prolonged halts in inhospitable jungles.

At Janickpore,⁴⁷ Capt. Kinloch had the strongest assurances from the man who had undertaken to supply grain that a large consignment would be delivered at Sindhuli, hence he continued the march to that place regardless of the suffering which his half-starved troops had to endure. Capt. Kinloch was eager to reach Sindhuli for other reasons also. It commanded⁴⁸ the neighbouring valley lying at the foot of the Nepal hills, and its occupation was essential for an invader from the plains. The fort at Sindhuli was in those days con-

⁴⁵ Letter from T. Rumbold, Dec. 19, 1767.

⁴⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., Jan. 12, 1768.

⁴⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 10, 1768.

⁴⁸ Sindhuli being situated on the "Seedly" river (Sindhuli river). (*Vide* Hamilton's *Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, 1819, p. 168.)

sidered to be very valuable,⁴⁰ and Capt. Kinloch was anxious to occupy it before the Gurkhas fortified the neighbouring passes.⁵⁰

The march to Sindhuli was unopposed, and the English troops easily got possession of the fort. The promised consignment of grain was, however, not to be found, and the plight of the sepoys was in consequence unimaginable. Famine now stared them in the face. Retreat under the present circumstances was out of the question, and it was impossible to hold on at Sindhuli for long, as all supplies of provisions had been cut off by the enemy. Capt. Kinloch decided to hurry on towards Kathmandu. The sepoys openly expressed their discontent, and many of them began to desert. But for the "spirited conduct"⁵¹ of Capt. Kinloch, the army would have refused to proceed any further. From Sindhuli, Capt. Kinloch marched⁵² towards Hariharpur,⁵³ when for the first time the Gurkhas made a countermove against the English. Prithvi Narayan sent an army under Virbhadrā to intercept Capt. Kinloch's detachment. A part of the Gurkha force proceeded towards Pavagarhi as well, lying at a distance of about two miles above Sindhuli, and the remainder of Virbhadrā's army descended to Dungebas along Dhulikhel-Dumja.⁵⁴ A second contingent under Vansraj was sent by the Gurkha chief to reinforce the army under Virbhadrā.

The fort of Hariharpur on the Vagmati river was soon obtained⁵⁵ by Capt. Kinloch, but he could not continue his

⁴⁰ Father Guisepee, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

⁵⁰ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, Jan. 28, 1768.

⁵¹ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, Jan. 12, 1768.

⁵² The Nepalese genealogical records do not corroborate Mr. Rumbold's account of Kinloch's march to, or conquest of Hariharpur. (*Vide* S. V. Gewali, *op. cit.*, p. 150, and letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, Jan. 12, 1768.)

⁵³ "The people of Nepal are very jealous concerning Makwanpur, Hariharpur, and Sindhuli, as the possession of these would give an enemy the entire command of the Tariyani." (Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 1938).

⁵⁴ S. V. Gewali, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

⁵⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., Jan. 12, 1768.

advance, as the river was in a flooded state. The troops had to be detained⁵⁶ in the fort for a number of days while rafts were hastily prepared to make a bridge across the river. Before, however, the rafts were ready, they were unfortunately washed away by a heavy downpour that further swelled the river, and made it impassable. Cooped up at Hariharpur, the sepoys were now in a rebellious mood. Provisions had run short, and there was little prospect of obtaining further supplies in the near future. Desertions became more frequent, and illness also caused heavy casualties. In despair, Capt. Kinloch had to order a forced retreat.⁵⁷ The Gurkhas now fell on the retiring army, and inflicted heavy losses.⁵⁸ Although Capt. Kinloch "behaved with the fortitude and resolution of a good officer, exerting himself more than many would have been capable of doing in the same situation,"⁵⁹ he was powerless against the elusive mountaineers who made surprise attacks in the rear from places difficult of access, and harassed the English troops by cutting off supplies of grain, and intercepting the camp-followers. Capt. Kinloch at last returned to the Tarai with a considerably depleted force,⁶⁰ and was ultimately

⁵⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 10, 1768.

⁵⁷ "One night all the Gorchians quitted the siege of Lalit Pattan to pursue the English army which, under the command of Captain Kinloch, had already taken Siduli, an important fort at the foot of Nepal hills which border upon the Kingdom of Tirhut : but Captain Kinloch not being able to penetrate the hills, either on the Siduli quarter or by the pass at Hareapur, in the Kingdom of Macwanpur, the army of Gorcha returned to Nepal to direct their operations against the city of Cathmandu " (Father Guisepee, *op. cit.*, p. 251.)

⁵⁸ According to Percy Landon (*vide his Nepal*, Vol. I, p. 63), there was an engagement at Hariharpur on August 25, in which the Gurkhas gained a victory over the English. In the official papers, however, there is no mention of any actual victory gained by the Gurkhas. Mr. Rumbold reported on the contrary that the Gurkhas "behaved despicably where troops were to oppose them," and "only in places difficult of access shewed any degree of spirit." (Beng. Sel. Com., Jan. 12, 1768.)

⁵⁹ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, Dec. 19, 1767.

⁶⁰ According to Mr. Richard Barwell, only 800 out of 2400 returned with Capt. Kinloch. (*Bengal: Past and Present*, X, p. 29.)

recalled by Mr. Rumbold on the refusal of the Governor and the Select Committee to send any reinforcements.⁶¹

Capt. Kinloch's failure was due to no "misconduct" on his part, as was suspected⁶² by the authorities at Calcutta, but was chiefly the result of a combination of highly adverse circumstances over which he had little control. In the first place, he had to undertake the expedition during a most unfavourable season when, on account of the rains, it was difficult to carry an army through the thickly wooded forests of Nepal Tarai. In the second place, for want of an adequate number of coolies sufficient provisions could not be carried along with the troops, and Capt. Kinloch had to depend on the scanty supplies that were obtained on the way with great difficulty. The lack of provisions was, as Mr. Rumbold later confessed to the Governor, "the grand point that has been the means of frustrating the attempt."^{62a} In the third place, the serious flood in the Vagmati river, but for which Capt. Kinloch would have reached Kathmandu, compelled the English troops to retreat precipitously from Hariharpur with disastrous consequences. In the fourth place, Capt. Kinloch was severely handicapped by the flight and desertion of a considerable portion⁶³ of his detachment. In the fifth place, sickness among the sepoys was unusually great owing to the unhealthy climate of the Tarai. In the last place, as Capt. Kinloch was himself entirely ignorant of the country, he laboured under a grave disadvantage in consequence.

While Capt. Kinloch cannot be held to have been personally responsible for the miscarriage of his expedition, it is difficult to overlook the extreme impatience and want of

⁶¹ Beng. Sel. Com., Dec. 11, 1767.

⁶² Letter to Mr. T. Rumbold, Dec. 11, 1767

Letter to Court, Dec. 16, 1767, "We have reasons to believe that there has been some misconduct in the officers or forgery in the intelligence which gave birth to this expedition, else Kinloch should have succeeded."

⁶² (a) Beng. Sel. Com., Jan. 12, 1768.

⁶³ It appears that four entire companies deserted to the enemy.

arduous. In a letter⁷⁴ dated July 17, 1769, Mr. Rumbold thus described the situation, "I have not been able to collect so large a sum from the lands taken from the Goorkhas as I was in hopes of doing, the ryots having neglected cultivating their ground owing to the interruption of the hill people who continually make incursions and destroy whatever they find. The country is so unhealthy that our sepoy's could not continue there during the rains."

Verelst and the Select Committee were severely disappointed at the unexpected miscarriage of the Nepal expedition. They ordered Mr. Rumbold to make the strictest enquiry into the causes of Capt. Kinloch's failure, and reminded him that they could not account "for the miscarriage otherwise than by supposing some misconduct in the officer, or forgery in the letters and informations given you by the Vaqueel and Faquir."⁷⁵

In his letter⁷⁶ of December 19, Mr. Rumbold gave a detailed account of the expedition, and ascribed its failure to unfavourable weather, want of provisions, and sickness and desertion of the sepoy's, exonerating Capt. Kinloch from blame in the following words, "As for Captain Kinloch who commanded I am certain he acted for the best." The authorities, however, dissented from Mr. Rumbold's opinion, and severely animadverted on the commanding officer's "hasty and imprudent" conduct. They decided to institute a court of enquiry at Bankipur for examining the behaviour of Capt. Kinloch, and directed⁷⁷ Mr. Rumbold to recall the latter forthwith to Patna. Mr. Rumbold in his reply⁷⁸ of January 28, strongly protested

⁷⁴ Beng. Sel. Com. Aug. 11, 1769.

Mr. Rumbold reported the following collections from these lands:—

" From the country of Burra Sicca Rupees	11,400
" From the country of Lowekpore Sicca Rupees	9,000

20,400

⁷⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., Dec. 11, 1767.

⁷⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., Jan. 12, 1768.

⁷⁷ Letter to Mr. T. Rumbold, Jan. 12, 1768.

⁷⁸ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, Jan. 28, 1768.

that the failure of the expedition had not been due to any imprudence on the part of Capt. Kinloch, but to "the unlucky circumstances" of "rain and the want of grain."⁷⁹ In consideration of the repeated assurances of Mr. Rumbold,⁸⁰ the Select Committee agreed⁸¹ at last to revoke their orders regarding the institution of public inquiry into Capt. Kinloch's conduct.

It is interesting to note that Verelst considered at this time the practicability of a second expedition to Nepal, and inquired⁸² of Mr. Rumbold what number of troops would be necessary for this purpose. The latter was strongly in favour of making a second attempt, and urged the Governor to sanction it without delay in view of the following favourable circumstances. In the first place, he urged, "Our being in possession of the low lands belonging to the Gourcha (from whence and from Bettayah plenty of provisions may be secured) will greatly facilitate another attempt."⁸³ In the second place, as the rainy season was now over, the difficulties experienced on the last occasion would no more have to be encountered. In the third place, a number of neighbouring chiefs were reported to be willing to cooperate with the English troops. Mr. Rumbold informed the Governor that Raja Jil Vikram Sing had made "an offer of conducting our troops through his own country,"⁸⁴ and that the latter had power "to bring over many other Rajahs to his party."⁸⁵ Capt. Kinloch similarly reported,⁸⁶ "Nothing is wanting, I firmly believe, to make me as many allies as I

⁷⁹ Letter from Capt. Kinloch to Mr. T. Rumbold, Dec. 25, 1767.

⁸⁰ Letter to Court, Feb. 9, 1768.

⁸¹ Beng. Sel. Com. Feb. 10, 1768.

⁸² Letter to Mr. T. Rumbold, Feb. 10, 1768.

⁸³ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, Jan. 28, 1768.

⁸⁴ Letter from Mr. Golding to Mr. T. Rumbold, Dec. 25, 1767.

⁸⁵ Letter from Mr. Golding to Mr. T. Rumbold, Jan. 3, 1768.

⁸⁶ Letter from Capt. Kinloch to Mr. T. Rumbold, Jan. 8, 1768.

Letter from Jeer Singh to Capt. Kinloch.

could wish." In the fourth place, Mr. Rumbold pointed out that the requisite number of troops could be easily spared from the Parganah battalions.⁸⁷ In the last place, the Governor was reminded by Mr. Rumbold, "The Goorkha's troops are badly armed, and only in places difficult of access shewed any degree of spirit."

After prolonged deliberations, the Select Committee at its meeting of February 16, 1768, decided⁸⁸ finally not to undertake another expedition for the present.

A number of considerations seem to have led to this decision. The force recommended⁸⁹ by Mr. Rumbold was in the Committee's opinion "too considerable" to be spared specially at a time when, on account of the war with Haidar Ali, the Madras authorities were repeatedly asking for⁹⁰ reinforcements from Bengal. Besides, the zamindars of a number of parganahs in Bihar were at this time in rebellion,⁹¹ and Shitab Ray urged the immediate⁹² despatch of a strong detachment to reinforce the six companies already sent⁹³ by Mr. Rumbold. The situation was doubtless grave, and it was not proper at the present moment to employ the Parganah sepoys elsewhere when their presence was necessary in the province itself for quelling the serious disturbances created by the hostile zemindars. Above all, the Committee hesitated to incur the additional expenses necessary for a second expedition without the previous approval of the Directors and considered it more advisable immediately "to reimburse to the Company the charges of the last expedition"⁹⁴ from the newly occupied

⁸⁷ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, Feb. 15, 1768.

⁸⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 16, 1768.

⁸⁹ "One complete battalion, besides five or six companies." *Vide* Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, February 15, 1768.

⁹⁰ Letter from President and Council of Fort St. George in the Secret Department, January 9, 1768.

⁹¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 17.

⁹² No. 18.

⁹³ No. 28.

⁹⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 16, 1768.

territories⁹⁵ on the borders of Bettiah than to embark on another costly enterprise. As correctly anticipated by the Committee, the Directors subsequently wrote to them in their general letter of November 11, 1768, "As we look with a favourable eye on every attempt for the extension of commerce, we do not disapprove the expedition to Nepaul, and are sorry it failed of success. You did right not to renew the expedition till the state of your forces would better admit of it, and to hold in your possession lands taken from the Goorkah Rajah, as an indemnification for the expenses we had been put to; and they may be of use, should it hereafter be thought proper to renew the attempt."⁹⁶

After the eventual conquest of Nepal by Prithvi Narayan any armed intervention in aid of the Newar princes was out of the question, and the authorities in Bengal decided at last to establish friendly relations with the Gurkha chief in the hope of opening up trade between Bengal and the Himalyan countries. The Council at Calcutta at their meeting⁹⁷ of October 31, 1769, resolved to accept the offer⁹⁸ of Mr. James Logan "to take a journey" to Nepal, Tibet, and other neighbouring lands, and deputed him on a commercial mission to these countries. Complimentary letters⁹⁹ were accordingly despatched to Prithvi Narayan Shah, and to other hill chiefs informing them of Mr. Logan's impending deputation to them. The Governor particularly assured Prithvi Narayan Shah that because of their former ignorance of the true character of the Newar Raja "the English sardars" had espoused his cause.

⁹⁵ Letter to Court, February 29, 1768.

⁹⁶ Letter from Court, Nov. 11, 1768.

⁹⁷ Beng. Pub. Cons., Oct. 31, 1769.

⁹⁸ *Vide* Mr. James Logan's *Memorandum*, (Home, O. C. No. 1 of Oct. 31, 1769.)

⁹⁹ Cop. 1. 1769-70, No. 103, (To Raja Jasa Goshmal).

Cop. 1. 1769-70, No. 104, (To Raja Jasa Goshmal).

Cop. 1. 1769-70, No. 105, (To Goran Sen).

Cop. 1. 1769-70, No. 106, (To Prithvi Narayan).

Cop. 1. 1769-70, No. 107, (To Prithvi Narayan).

Cop. 1. 1769-70, No. 108, etc. (To Five other Rajas).

"but now as he had been tried and found wanting, and as the praises of the Gurkha chief had been heard from every quarter," the English were no more inclined to assist the former, and were sincerely "desirous of entering into friendship" with the present Gurkha government of Nepal.¹⁰⁰ The Gurkha chief was further reminded that a free trade between Bengal and Nepal was bound to be of mutual advantage, and therefore ought to be encouraged.

All efforts to remove the misunderstanding caused by the last expedition, and come to an agreement with Prithvi Narayan Shah on the question of trade proved abortive, and Mr. Logan's mission¹⁰¹ undertaken with every hope¹⁰² of success

¹⁰⁰ Cop. I. 1769-70, No. 107 Letter to Prithvi Narayan Shah, Nov. 13, 1769.

¹⁰¹ Letter to Court, Jan. 25, 1770.

¹⁰² Letter from Surgeon Jas. Logan to the Governor, August 25, 1769. This letter contains valuable information regarding the trans-Himalyan trade of Bengal and the Gurkha conquest of Nepal, and deserves to be quoted in full.

As Mr. Logan had accompanied Capt. Kinloch during the last expedition to Nepal, he could write from personal knowledge about Nepal and the neighbouring countries. The letter runs as follows:—

"Having learnt that the Hon'ble Company have recommended a trial to open a trade between these provinces, Tibett, and the western provinces of China by the way of Neypoll, and considering the little knowledge Europeans have yet acquired of these countries, and the commerce of which they are capable, I am led to believe that in order to obtain a knowledge so necessary to the prosecution of this scheme, there is wanted a person, on whose integrity some dependence may be placed, who shall, endowed with proper authorities on the part of the Company, go and inform himself in the countries themselves of the commerce of which they are capable with Hindustan, of the means by which such commerce, if practicable, may be established, and transmit a faithful account of his discoveries.

"Should a further intelligence on this subject be thought necessary than what you are already possess of, I have reasons to think that, notwithstanding the commotions in these parts and the part the Company have already taken in them, such intelligence is still attainable.

"I have had some opportunity which I hope I have not altogether neglected, of coming to a knowledge of several particulars of these countries not commonly known, and should you approve the design, and think

produced no tangible results. Being pre-occupied in consolidating his new conquests in Nepal, Prithvi Narayan Shah had evidently no time for commercial negotiations, besides he was

me worthy to be trusted on such an occasion, I am ready to undertake a journey into them on the errand I here propose. The merchants of Patna can vouch that in times of peace a very considerable trade used to be carried on between their city and Neypoll, and with Tibett, by the way of Neypoll. The chief exports of Patna in this trade were coarse woolen cloths called Parpeteens, Coral, Salt, Betelnut, Cotton cloaths, Patna chintzes, Nutmegs etc. The imports Gold ingots, Gold dust, Borax, Musk, Cow tails, Chirris etc. The common current value of gold in Neypoll (and it is chiefly brought there from Tibett) is said to be 50 per cent. less than it is at Patna. It does not appear that there subsisted any commercial treatys between the Soubahs of Bahar and the Rajas of these countries for the protection of this trade. It is therefore probable that, under proper regulations and a sure protection, it is capable of being much more considerable than ever it was. When the communication is opened it is not above eight or nine days journey from Patna to Cutmundoo, the chief city of Neypoll, and the road at the most rugged place is such as loaded bullocks etc., may and do travel. The Gundak is navigable for the largest boats used on the Ganges, at all times, to within two days journey of Neypoll, and in the rains to within a few coss. The Bagmatty is also navigable to within 20 coss. But whether the roads from the plain of Neypoll to the places of these rivers to which they are navigable, be such as will admit of goods being transported directly from the one to the others I have not learnt.

" It is well-known to you that Neypoll has been the object of a war these many years between Perty Naraineseey the Raja of Goorka on one part, and the three Rajas of the three principal citys of Neypoll on the other. The Gurka has prevailed and two of the confederates, it is said, have lately surrendered upon terms to the conqueror. The other, Juyper Cussmull, who was the head of the confederacy having lost Cutmundoo his capital, is now either cooped up in a stronghold, or has retired into Tibett, where he has some territory and a friend and protector in the Goora, or white Lama, the Pontiff of Laissah. To answer the intent of my journey it will be necessary for me to apply myself with such credentials etc. as shall be given me, to one or other of these interests as you shall please to determine. Should it be to that of Juyper Cuss, who is the hereditary prince of the greater part of Neypoll, and who, already depending on the succour of the English, has lost almost his all, and shut every door of accommodation with the conqueror against himself, I will undertake to find him out, wherever he is, and personally confer with him. There is no doubt but many of his old subjects are still attached to him. A small force, with what efforts he may still be able to make himself, would be sufficient to re-establish his government,

CHAPTER III

THE DISPUTES WITH THE DUTCH

Clive's decisive triumph over the Dutch armament in 1759 had shattered the political ambitions of the Chinsura authorities, and though they afterwards gave no cause for a renewal of hostilities, they never ceased to envy the commercial ascendancy of their English rivals, and resented the assumption of the Diwani by the latter. Powerless to harm the English either at arms, or at diplomacy, the Dutch authorities at Chinsura, however, always grumbled at the interruption and decline of their commerce and bitterly complained of the vexatious opposition and rapacity of the Nawab's officials as well as the English gumashtahs. Such complaints not infrequently occasioned acrimonious disputes which tended to accentuate the commercial jealousy subsisting between the Dutch and the English Companies in Bengal.

The English relations with the Chinsura authorities were particularly strained during Verelst's regime because of commercial reasons. The Dutch trade in Bengal was doubtless adversely affected by the steady enlargement¹ of the English Company's Investment,² whereas the inland trade of the Dutch merchants was totally prohibited.³ As a result of all this,

¹ Beng Sel. Com., March 10, 1767.

² Notwithstanding the increase of the Company's Investment, the Directors suspected that the cargoes of the Dutch and the French ships were "more valuable than ours," and found fault with their servants for "providing cargoes for the French and Dutch ships." Letter from Court, Nov. 20, 1767.

³ Beng. Sel. Com., 13, 1767. (*Vide* the 'parvanah' from Nawab Sniffuddaulah, dated Oct. 7, 1767, to the Dutch and other European merchants forbidding them to trade in articles like grain, salt, betelnut, and tobacco.)

Beng. Sel. Com., Nov. 29, 1767. (*Vide* the trade regulations circulated by the Ministers to the Zamindars and officers of the Government prohibiting the inland trade of the Europeans.)

there was naturally great resentment at Chinsura. It may be pointed out here in fairness to the English Directors that they not only did not desire to see the trade of the other European Companies unfairly handicapped, or stopped, but expressly advised their servants in Bengal to prevent all possible encroachments on the commercial rights and privileges hitherto enjoyed by them.

"We may reasonably expect," the Directors wrote⁴ in 1766, "the other European nations will be jealous of our growing powers in Bengal. It must, therefore, be a particular object of our attention to give them no just cause of complaint, but to let them possess the same privileges they are entitled to. Great care should be taken that our servants in 'the subordinates', and our Gomastahs at all Aurungs do not impede them in their investments. The Company's advantages in the revenue are now become blended with the general welfare of the country, so that it is our interest as well as our duty to promote as much as possible the bringing of money from all quarters into the country for which reason as well as to prevent disputes with their sovereigns in Europe, we recommend it to you in general to be very circumspect in your behaviour to them, and in no way to intrude upon their privileges." Again, in 1768 the Directors similarly cautioned the authorities at Calcutta, "The freedom of trade of other European traders should not upon any account be infringed, though, at the same time, we expect it should be reciprocal as well in their lands as in ours."⁵

The earliest complaints that Verelst received from the Dutch were about the frequent detention⁶ of their boats at the customs 'chaukis.' Such detentions, however, were not al-

⁴ Letter from Court, May 17, 1766.

⁵ Letter from Court, March 16, 1768.

⁶ Cop. P. L. I. 1766-67, No. 1.

Trans. P. L. I. 1766-67, No. 4.

Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 81.

Abs. I. 1766-67, p. 9.

ways due to the rapacity of the chaukidars, as the Dutch represented,⁷ but were generally caused by a number of other circumstances which the latter for obvious reasons never cared to admit. In the first place, as the dastaks issued by the Dutch authorities were often vaguely worded, and did not contain a precise statement regarding the particulars of the goods, the customs officials were compelled to detain the boats in order to check all the goods carried in them. In the second place, detentions were sometimes necessarily prolonged, because the Dutch authorities never willingly allowed their boats to be searched by the chaukidars who on their part would not let the boats pass without making a thorough search thereof. In the third place, as the inland trade of the Europeans had already been prohibited, the customs officials had to detain such boats as were laden with goods not meant for the recognised sea-borne trade. In the fourth place, the failure to pay up the necessary duties at the customs stations was also a frequent cause of delay in the release of the boats.

searched, there does not seem to be any reason why the Dutch and the French should."¹⁰

While Verelst was unwilling to pay any attention to unreasonable complaints concerning the detention of boats, he took all possible steps to prevent the illegal practices of the chaukidars who were strictly warned on this subject, and were instructed not to give the European merchants any just cause for complaint. Any delinquency on the part of the chaukidars was severely dealt with, and Muhammad Riza Khan had instructions from the Governor to dismiss¹¹ them from their posts, when their guilt was fully established. For instance, when the Dutch authorities complained early in 1767 against the chaukidar of Bhutmari for having wrongfully collected more than the usual amount of duties, the latter was ordered to refund the excess collected and was afterwards dismissed from his post.¹² Muhammad Riza Khan was ordered by the Governor to keep a strict eye on such rapacious chaukidars, and whenever the Dutch Vakil made any complaints against them, they were always promptly examined by Muhammad Riza Khan.¹³ On account of such strict regulations, the complaints against the chaukidars gradually came to an end.

A more serious complaint which the Dutch preferred to Verelst shortly after his assumption of office was in regard to the obstacles they met with in their opium trade. The Dutch evidently suspected¹⁴ that the English Company intended to monopolise the entire business in Bihar opium. Such a suspicion arose from the fact that a person formerly in the service of the Company had recently been entrusted with the sole management of the opium business. The Dutch complained that in consequence of this appointment they were unable to make fair and equitable purchases for their own re-

¹⁰ Cop. P. L. I. 1766-67, No. 4.

¹¹ Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 15.

¹² Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 125.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 82.

quirements from the dealers.¹⁵ The Governor took prompt action in the matter and ordered¹⁶ Muhammad Riza Khan to see that the Dutch were not deprived of their legitimate share in the opium business, as the Directors had recently written to the Calcutta authorities, ". . . do not obstruct the Dutch in their opium trade which is an object of such importance to them that any difficulties they may be laid under in this part of their investment will certainly be attended with very disagreeable altercations between the two Companies in Europe, and must, as much as possible, be avoided."¹⁷

Verelst was in favour of the opium business being left free to all traders so that the revenues of the Government might not suffer. Under instructions from him, therefore, Muhammad Riza Khan issued orders¹⁸ to Raja Shitab Ray to open the trade to all people, and prevent any individual from engrossing the entire business. Thus, the "open door" policy in opium trade was confirmed, and free licence was given to all on payment of the requisite duties. The grievance of the Dutch was thus apparently removed, for orders were soon promulgated¹⁹ prohibiting the establishment of monopoly by any individual, or Company.

It may be pointed out here that the Governor was not unaware of the danger that the Dutch might themselves try to grasp the whole opium business by taking an undue advantage of the free trade allowed. He warned Muhammad Riza Khan that should the Dutch be ever found to be aiming at a monopoly, they should at once be deprived of their share in the business altogether and the "open door" should be closed to them.²⁰ This clearly shows that Verelst was ready to remove the just grievances of the Dutch, but he was not pre-

¹⁵ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 81.

¹⁶ Trans. R. 1766-67, No. 82.

¹⁷ Letter from Court. May 17. 1766.

¹⁸ Trans. R. 1766-68, No. 125.

¹⁹ Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 15.

²⁰ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 81.

pared to allow the interests of the English Company to be jeopardised in any manner. As an example of the Governor's fairness, it may be mentioned here that he did not approve of an increase in the duty on opium paid by the Dutch and the French, and advised Muhammad Riza Khan to maintain the old rate.²¹

The principal cause of the frequent disputes between the English and the Dutch authorities during Verelst's administration was, however, the uncommon scarcity²² of weavers, which, in fact, unfavourably affected the foreign trade of all the European Companies. The Dutch bitterly complained²³ that the weavers engaged by them were enticed away by the agents of the English company, and that the former supplied cloths to none except the English.²⁴ In order to prevent such misunderstanding Clive had agreed to the institution of a joint commission for making an enquiry into the alleged cases of oppression, but the Dutch later suggested an equitable partition of the weavers among the various European Companies. Even this proposal had been assented²⁵ to by Clive and Verelst on condition, however, that the complaints of the Dutch should first be investigated by the commissioners appointed for this purpose.²⁶ After Clive's departure, the Dutch suddenly changed their former attitude regarding the proposed enquiry, and insisted on the enumeration of the weavers as a preliminary measure.²⁷ They urged that they had been complaining against the English agents for several years past without any effect, and that these disputes could

²¹ Cop. P. L. I. 1766-67, No. 4.

²² Letter from Verelst to Court, March 17, 1767.

²³ Bolts, Considerations etc., pp. 73 and 192. Verelst, View etc., App., p. 99.

²⁴ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 8, 1767.

²⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., July 11, 1767.

²⁶ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 176.

²⁷ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 8, 1767.

not be satisfactorily settled without a final partition of the weavers.²⁵

In the hope of bringing about the desired partition of the weavers the Dutch now began to prefer serious charges against the English gumashtahs and 'dallals' who, as the Chinsura authorities pointed out, "engaged themselves to work for nobody than for the English, beating and tormenting all of them that make bold to deliver any goods to us, cutting down from the weavers' loom the cloths that were to be made for us."²⁶ They further complained that in consequence of such high-handed methods adopted by the English 'dallals,' the weavers now as a rule refused²⁷ to work for the other European Companies. As, however, the gumashtahs of the Dutch and the English Companies recriminated against each other with equal bitterness, and as there was reason to suspect that the Dutch too left no means untried to seduce²⁸ the weavers from the service of the English Company, Verelst informed the Chinsura authorities that the English commissioners²⁹ had already been appointed "to make the circuit of the aurungs," and requested them therefore to produce "positive proofs" of the alleged oppressions through their own commissioners, so that the guilty might be duly punished. The Dutch, however, showed no enthusiasm for the proposed enquiry, but continued to press³⁰ for an immediate partition of the weavers as the best means of removing all chances of friction.

Although Verelst had originally favoured the idea of a partition of the weavers as desired by the Dutch and the French, he changed his mind subsequently when Muhamamad

Riza Khan pointed out the impracticability as well as the undesirable results of such a scheme.³⁴ The Governor was fully convinced that a partition of the weavers, even if it were at all practicable, would lead to disastrous consequences. In the first place, it would cause great distress to the weavers themselves. They would be forced to accept the price offered by the Company to which they were to be permanently assigned, and would not be able to dispose of their goods in the open market to the highest bidder. In the second place, the merchants of the country too would be unjustly deprived of their legitimate rights and privileges, and would be unable to secure supplies of cloths sufficient for the requirements of the local people. In the third place, the total production of the goods would go down in the absence of a free competition among the purchasers. In the fourth place, the revenues of the Government would ultimately suffer as a result of such a diminution in the output of the manufactured goods.

In view of the aforesaid considerations, the Governor and Council definitely refused³⁵ to acquiesce in the proposal regarding the partition of the weavers. The authorities at Chinsura thereupon vehemently protested³⁶ against the refusal of the English to listen to their just representations, and in vain reminded³⁷ the Governor that the partition of the weavers had been promised to them both by himself and Lord Clive. The Governor once more expressed his inability to comply with their request.³⁸ This provoked a fresh rejoinder³⁹ from Chinsura. The Governor and Council were, however, adamant on this point, and no compromise was consequently possible.⁴⁰ The Dutch authorities were obliged at last to relinquish⁴¹ their claims to a partition of the weavers ; and thus

³⁴ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 176.

³⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 8, 1767.

³⁶ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 18, 1767.

³⁷ Letter from the Director and Council at Chinsura, June 14, 1767.

³⁸ Letter to the Director and Council at Chinsura, June 18, 1767.

³⁹ Letter from the Director and Council at Chinsura, June 25, 1767.

⁴⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons., July 11, 1767.

⁴¹ Beng. Pub. Cons., July 27, 1767.

the prolonged altercations between the Councils at Calcutta and Chinsura were finally terminated with good grace.

It must be stated here that Verelst's opposition to the proposed partition of the weavers was not due to economic or commercial reasons alone. The Governor appears to have considered the scheme politically inexpedient too. He thought that a partition of the weavers among the European Companies was bound to bring the Nizam into contempt.⁴² He stressed this aspect of the question in a general letter to the Directors in the following words, "A participation of the weavers would be to throw off the mask, and acknowledge ourselves the sovereigns of the country. It would counteract, in the most expressive manner, the professions we make, the appearances we necessarily assume, and the endeavours we use of seeming to act from the Nabob's authority only. In a word, the disproportion of hands necessary to form their investment and yours would appear so great that we could not accept the proposals of participation, without confessing all that policy requires should be concealed."⁴³

Though the proposed enumeration of the weavers could not take place for reasons stated above, the Dutch were afforded certain minor concessions which they had not enjoyed so far. At the instance of the Governor, Muhammad Riza Khan reduced⁴⁴ the '*abwab*' and certain other duties for the encouragement and growth of the weaving industry in Bengal. It was hoped that as a result of such reduction of duty the output of the goods would increase, and the European Companies would no more have any cause for complaint about the scarcity of goods.⁴⁵ The most important measure in this con-

⁴² Letter to the Dutch Director, June 11, 1767.

⁴³ Letter to Court, Sept. 14, 1767.

⁴⁴ Cop. 1. 1766-67, No. 176.

⁴⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., July 6, 1767. "We have already procured the weavers an exemption from all occasional taxes, any other demand that can in the least interrupt or impede their labours."

nection was the abolition⁴⁶ of the duty of 'mangan'⁴⁷ which the Dutch had to pay so far in common with the other European Companies. The Governor thus informed the Select Committee of this reform,⁴⁸ "To remove every obstacle which the trade of the French and the Dutch Companies may labour under, we have exerted our interest with the ministers to get the duty of Mongen abolished, which will cause a difference of 20,000 rupees yearly to the Government." Verelst was, however, fully conscious of the fact that such superficial reforms were not likely to satisfy the Dutch, or the French, for, as he confessed,⁴⁹ "The truth of the matter is that this country does not afford a sufficient quantity of goods to answer the demands of each Company since our Company's investments have been so considerably increased, although the trade of private merchants has been curbed and curtailed to the utmost."

The Dutch did not always peacefully appeal to the Calcutta authorities for redress of their grievances. Sometimes they took the law into their own hands, and sought to intimidate the Nizamat officials by having recourse to unlawful violence. On such occasions, the Company's servants had to exercise their legitimate powers in preventing such unwarranted assumption of authority by the Dutch merchants.

In 1767 one such incident⁵⁰ occurred in the Burdwan District. This happened to attract the notice of the Directors who mildly rebuked their servants in Bengal for having taken strong measures against the Dutch independently of the local Raja. The Dutch had forcibly seized a customs official who was alleged to have made unlawful exactions⁵¹ on their gumashtah. The Resident at Burdwan took prompt action in

⁴⁶ Letter to the Dutch Director, June 11, 1767.

⁴⁷ A cess levied to defray the allowance of the public officers at landing-places and custom stations.

⁴⁸ Letter to Sel. Com., June 28, 1767.

⁴⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., July 6, 1767.

⁵⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons., Aug. 17, 1767.

⁵¹ Letters from Mr. Graham, Resident at Bordwan, to Mr. Russell, Collector-General, July 17, and Aug. 12, 1767.

the matter,⁵² and eventually secured the release of the arrested official. The Directors, however, wrote,⁵³ "Altho' we approve the spirit of your conduct toward the Dutch upon their seizing the Sircar of the Gaut at Duan Gunge, yet being a matter properly recognisable by the Country Government, the Resident at Burdwan should not have taken satisfaction but obtained it through the Rajah—you likewise went too far in threatening the Dutch, who refused to make proper submission for this insult, to withdraw the benefit of their trade in our lands." It was, however, difficult to observe such forbearance as was enjoined upon by the Directors, when the Dutch gave serious provocation to the Company's officials by beating and abusing⁵⁴ the subordinate servants of the Government, or by actually putting them in confinement.⁵⁵

Mr. Bolts's alleged intrigue⁵⁶ with the Dutch further embittered the relations between the authorities at Calcutta and Chinsura. A Dutchman by birth, Mr. Bolts was suspected during his disputes with the Governor and Council to be carrying on "an improper intercourse" with the authorities at Chinsura where he frequently resided⁵⁷ in spite of the Governor's orders that he must not leave Calcutta.

In September 1767 Mr. Kelsall, Chief of the factory at Dacca, informed⁵⁸ the Governor of the re-establishment of the Dutch factory at Dacca for the promotion of the private trade of Mr. Bolts and his partner, Mr. Vernet, the Dutch Director. This "private compact of Messrs Vernet and Bolts"⁵⁹ was considered to be a danger to the commercial interests of the Company.

⁵² Letter from Mr. Graham to the Hon'ble G. J. Vernet Aug. 12, 1767.

⁵³ Letter from Court, March 16, 1768.

⁵⁴ Beng. Pub. Cons., Nov. 5, 1767.

⁵⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., Dec. 24, 1767.

⁵⁶ Beng. Pub. Cons., Oct. 1, 1767.

⁵⁷ Verelst, *op. cit.*, App., p. 205.

⁵⁸ Letter from Mr. Kelsall, Sept. 18, 1767.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Mr. Kelball wrote, "In a letter I had the honour to address you in the month of May last, I mentioned, though in a cursory manner, the footing on which the Dutch had then newly re-established their factory at Dacca, not, as the event has shown, to transact business on behalf of their Company, but, under the sanction of public authority, to fulfil a private compact of Messrs Vernet and Bolts. The late Dutch Resident, Mr. Lankheet, disdained to accept a commission on such terms whereupon he was superseded. His successor, when he found, instead of a representative of the Company, that he was sent up in the capacity of a mere Gomastah, to fulfil a private engagement, in like manner declined it. Both these gentlemen have ever since been violently persecuted by Mr. Vernet. Here is an Armenian, one Coja Miguel Sautier, a man that has before done business for Mr. Bolts, who, not so scrupulous as either of the Dutch gentlemen, has made no difficulty of accepting the commission. The business is now in his hands, and, to fulfil it, he has had made over to him a sum to the amount of near seven lacks of rupees,⁶⁰ so enormous a sum I should have thought even beyond the conscience even of an Armenian to presume to invest, and should have doubted my information, if I had not received it from the best authority, one of the Dutch gentlemen. I have thought it my duty to give you this intelligence, and trust, Sir, you will take measures for defeating the intentions of Messrs Vernet and Bolts, and of the Armenian, their agent, which must naturally prejudice our Company's business and the trade in general, since, in order to get in their investment, they must necessarily purchase at an advanced price."

Although the Governor did not immediately place this letter before the Council, evidently because he awaited further information on this subject, he was convinced that Bolts's relations with the Dutch Director were not above suspicion.⁶¹ The Council therefore resolved⁶² in October, "Farther that

⁶⁰ £87,500.

⁶¹ Verelst, *op. cit.*, App., p. 196.

⁶² Beng. Pub. Cons., Oct. 1, 1767.

we hear he (Mr. Bolts) is carrying on an improper intercourse with the Dutch to the prejudice of the honourable Company's affairs, and, on that account, positively forbid his leaving Calcutta without our express permission." Mr. Bolts, however, paid no heed to this prohibition, and continued⁶³ his friendship with the Dutch Director in open disregard of the Council's orders.⁶⁴ On the 9th of October,⁶⁵ he wrote to the Governor in a defiant tone, referring to the charge that he was carrying on a secret intrigue with the Dutch as utterly false and baseless. He asked to be confronted with his accusers, and claimed to have as sincere a regard for the interest of the Company as any member of the Council.⁶⁶

Verelst's suspicion⁶⁷ that Mr. Bolts had secretly engaged with Mr. Vernet "to monopolize the cloth-trade of Dacca" could not, however, be conclusively proved, and attempts were made in vain to secure written confirmation of Mr. Kelsall's report from Mr. Lankheet. On September 19, 1768, the Council wrote⁶⁸ to the Directors, "The President this day⁶⁹ laid before us a letter he received from the Chief at Dacca concerning Mr. Bolts assisting the Dutch in procuring their investment, and acquainted us he has for some time past had intimation of the subject on which it treats. But not having been able to procure authentic proofs regarding it, he deferred recording it until this time. He is still endeavouring to gain every other information in his power, which you shall be fully acquainted within our future advices."

⁶³ Letter to Court, Dec. 10, 1767.

⁶⁴ Mr. Bolts later admitted that he had been obliged to leave Calcutta "to avoid the seizure of his person." *Vide* his petition, May 19, 1769.

⁶⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., Oct. 12, 1767.

⁶⁶ Letter from Mr. Bolts, Oct. 9, 1767.

⁶⁷ Verelst, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁶⁸ *Vide* postscript of September 19 to Letter to Court, dated September 13, 1768.

⁶⁹ This letter though received by the Governor a year ago had not been communicated to the Council so far.

Mr. Kelsall's accusation against Mr. Bolts of a secret compact with Mr. Vernet failed to satisfy the Directors in the absence of a proper affidavit from Mr. Lankheet. The Directors thus wrote⁷⁰ to the Governor and Council. "as this representation is not authenticated either by Mr. Lankheet's affidavit, or any other evidence, we cannot make any use of it in justification for your sending Mr. Bolts to England in the manner you did. But we hope and expect that you have made a very strict enquiry into this affair and punished such of our servants as have been found guilty of such notorious infidelity to their employers, and we desire you will not fail to transmit the whole of your proceedings in this respect to us, authenticated in the clearest and fullest manner, so as to be made use of as evidence in the Courts of Record here, if there should be any necessity so to do in order to obtain justice and satisfaction to the Company for this offence. Mr. Lankheet's information at large upon oath touching this transaction seems to be the most material evidence, and we hope you will be able to obtain it."⁷¹

In 1769 there occurred a serious dispute between the Dutch authorities and the Faujdar of Hooghly about the payment of the duties of the *Bakshibandar*, and the unauthorized erection of a landmark at Chinsura by the Dutch. Raziuddin Muhammad Khan, the Faujdar, had made numerous representations, both oral and written, to the Dutch Director regarding these matters, but the latter gave no satisfactory reply.⁷² Early in September, the Faujdar complained to the Governor that the Chinsura authorities not only refused to pay duties properly, but had lately erected a landmark which they would not demolish in spite of his repeated protests.⁷³ With a view to coerce the Dutch, Raziuddin Muhammad Khan detained a number of rice boats belonging to them. Thereupon the

⁷⁰ Letter from Court, March 23, 1770.

⁷¹ The Council failed to obtain the affidavit.

⁷² Cop. R. 1769, No. 84.

⁷³ Trans. R. 1769, No. 126.

Dutch Director sent a party of fifty soldiers under a Captain to release the boats by force.⁷⁴ This obliged the Faujdar to order his own men to hold themselves in readiness to meet the opposition of the Dutch. This had the desired effect, and the Dutch did not put in an appearance for the time being. As it was reported just at this time that a large number of Dutch soldiers had arrived⁷⁵ at Chinsura from Europe, the Faujdar ordered a vigilant watch to be kept on the activities of the Dutch factory.

The Dutch Director in the meantime complained to Muhammad Riza Khan against the Faujdar, but the former approved the latter's conduct, and sent a '*parvanah*' ordering the Dutch to remove the landmark, to pay the usual duties, and not to interfere with the rights of the faujdari.⁷⁶ The Dutch Director promptly replied that the landmark in question had been erected with the permission of Mirza Muhammad Kazim Khan, the former Faujdar of Hooghly, and that it would not be removed. As regards the other affairs of the faujdari, he asserted in a defiant tone that he would not allow the prescriptive rights of his Company to be altered in any manner, and claimed valuable privileges on the basis of a *Sanad* which was declared by the Faujdar to be fictitious.⁷⁷ The latter immediately reported "this insolent behaviour" of the Dutch Director to Verelst, and asked for permission to demolish the landmark by force, for, as he said, "until the landmark is removed, the affairs of the *Sarkar* will never be administered properly. On the contrary, the Dutch Director will grow more and more insolent."⁷⁸ On hearing of this, the Governor wrote⁷⁹ to Muhammad Riza Khan that the attitude

⁷⁴ Cop. R. 1769, No. 84.

⁷⁵ Cop. R. 1769, No. 92.

⁷⁶ Trans. R. 1769, No. 141.

⁷⁷ Trans. R. 1769, No. 165. The *Sanad* was said to have been obtained from the Nawab "probably by some stratagem."

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Letter to Muhammad Riza Khan, Sept. 21, 1769.

of the Dutch Director was indeed "highly reprehensible and derogatory to the Nizam," and that the Faujdar should be afforded necessary assistance in compelling the Dutch to obey his orders.

Aimed with the support of the Governor and Muhammad Riza Khan, the Faujdar decided on punitive measures⁸⁰ against the Dutch, and stopped the supply of provisions to their factory at Chinma. Every gate of the factory was closely guarded, and no one was allowed to pass, or carry provisions. For two days there was a general embargo on the importation of grain into Chinma, and guards were placed round the landmark.⁸¹ Enraged at this, the Dutch retaliated by capturing and destroying the Government boat which had been stationed at Chandernagore to intercept the rice boats belonging to them. They also forcibly seized two boats coming from Calcutta, and imprisoned two sepoys belonging to the Government. On being informed of these outrages, Muhammad Riza Khan sent a number of sepoys from Murshidabad to support the Faujdar, and pressed⁸² the Governor to sanction an immediate embargo on the entire business of the Dutch as a punishment for their insolence and high-handedness. Having no authority to use open force against the factory people, the Faujdar managed by stratagem to get two of the Dutch soldiers into his custody, and informed the Dutch Director that the latter would be kept in confinement so long as the two sepoys of the Government were not released. Thus outwitted by the Faujdar, the Dutch authorities had subsequently to deliver up the sepoys with their arms in the hope of procuring the release of their own soldiers.⁸³

Reduced to the utmost extremities in the meanwhile by the stoppage of all supplies of grain, and convinced of the futility of prolonging their opposition to the Faujdar, the

⁸⁰ Trans. R. 1769, No. 162.

⁸¹ Trans. R. 1769, No. 169.

⁸² Trans. R. 1769, No. 166.

⁸³ Trans. R. 1769, No. 168.

authorities at Chinsura at last deputed⁸⁴ two gentlemen to Calcutta with the object of persuading the Governor to use his influence in settling their disputes with the Nizam. The deputies earnestly pleaded for the immediate appointment of an arbitrator on behalf of the Nawab to decide the points at issue, and promised to abide by his decision, and obey the Nizam orders in future. Subsequently, the Dutch Governor himself came to see Verelst, and on behalf of the Chinsura authorities offered profuse apologies for their past conduct.⁸⁵

In view of the submissive and conciliatory attitude of the Dutch, and because of the famine conditions prevailing in the country, the Governor asked⁸⁶ the Faujdar and Muhammad Riza Khan to allow the passage of grain to the Dutch factory as usual, in order that the poor people might not die of starvation. In accordance with the Governor's instructions, Muhammad Riza Khan issued orders⁸⁷ to the Faujdar to permit the passage of provisions to the Dutch, and to withdraw the embargo laid on their trade. An arbitrator was also appointed⁸⁸ to settle the pending disputes, and determine the boundaries.

The humiliation that the Dutch had to endure in consequence of their indiscreet obduracy and violence served only to reveal the intrinsic weakness of their position under the changed conditions following the assumption of the Diwani by the English.

⁸⁴ Letter to Raziuddin Muhammad Khan, October 1, 1769.

⁸⁵ Letter to Muhammad Riza Khan, Oct. 21, 1769.

⁸⁶ Letter to Raziuddin Muhammad, Oct. 17, 1769.

Letter to Muhammad Riza Khan, Oct. 17, 1769.

⁸⁷ Trans. R. 1769, No. 172.

⁸⁸ Trans. R. 1769, No. 173.

CHAPTER IV

THE ANGLO-MARATHA NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING THE CESSION OF CUTTACK.

Ever since the menace¹ of a Maratha invasion into Bengal in the time² of Mir Qasim the authorities at Calcutta had been desirous of occupying Cuttack for the purpose of strengthening the frontier on that side. During the governorship of Vansittart repeated requests were made³ to the Nawab to sanction an armed expedition against Cuttack, but as the Nawab was unwilling to risk a rupture with the Marathas, the Council had to drop⁴ the proposed Cuttack expedition. When Clive became Governor of Bengal for the second time, he sought to obtain Cuttack by peaceful negotiations with Januji Bhonsle, the Raja of Nagpur, who since his coming into possession of Cuttack after the death of his father, Raghuji Bhonsle, had been continually pressing the English for the chauth of Bengal.

Early in January, 1766,⁵ the negotiations were set on foot by Clive on the plea of settling the chauth. Clive thus explained his motive to the Directors, "Opening a communication between the Northern Circars and Bengal must prove mutually advantageous to your Presidency at Fort Saint George, and to us; we have therefore determined to embrace the favourable opportunity which the present feeble condition of the

¹ Abs. P. L. R. 1759-65, p. 45. Sheo Bhat created serious disturbances in Midnapore and threatened to march against Murshidabad, if the chauth was withheld any longer.

² In 1761 there were apprehensions of a Maratha invasion through Visnupur, or Birbhum. (Beng. Pub. Cons., May 8, 1761, and Trans. P. L. I., 1761, No. 404.)

³ Trans. P. L. I. 1761, Nos. 425-6.

Trans. P. L. I. 1762, Nos. 3, 6, 34, 42.

Beng. Pub. Cons., Jan. 16, 1762.

⁴ Beng. Pub. Cons., Feb. 18, 1762.

⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., Jan. 9, 1766.

Marattoes affords, to carry this measure into execution, and have for that purpose set on foot a negotiation with their chief; whereby we propose he shall cede to us the Northern parts of Orissa, now in his possession, upon our consenting to pay a certain stipulated annual revenue."⁶

In order to expedite the desired settlement with Januji, Clive instructed Mr. T. Motte who had recently⁷ been ordered to go to Sambhalpur for the purchase of diamonds to proceed to Nagpur and negotiate matters personally with the Maratha chief. Mr. Motte, however, could not go to Nagpur, as towards the end of May he was informed by Bhavani Pandit, the Maratha Governor of Cuttack, that owing to his disputes with the Peshwa Madhav Rao, Januji had given up all thoughts of an agreement with the English for the present. In October the Select Committee resolved⁸ to offer military assistance to Januji against Sheo Bhat who was at present in rebellion against his master. The object of the Committee was doubtless to win the goodwill of the Maratha chief⁹ and thus hasten the negotiations concerning Cuttack.

While Clive considered it undesirable¹⁰ to alienate Januji by totally refusing to pay the chauth to which the latter was "in justice and equity strictly entitled,"¹¹ he wanted to make the payment of the chauth conditional on the cession of Cuttack which, as Clive thought, "though at present of little or no advantage to Janoojee would, in our possession, produce nearly sufficient to pay the whole amount of the chout." With

⁶ Letter to Court, Jan. 31, 1766.

Fourth Report, 1773, p. 520.

⁷ He left Calcutta on March 13. His interesting narrative is available in the Asiatic Annual Register of 1799 (*vide* Miscellaneous Tracts, pp. 48-84.)

⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., Oct. 7, 1766.

⁹ Clive wrote to Januji saying that their enemies and friends were common to both. (Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 22).

¹⁰ Clive urged, "With Janoojee it is our interest to be upon terms of friendship."

¹¹ Letter from Clive to Sel. Com., Jan. 16, 1767.

a view to decide the whole question of the chauth, and negotiate the cession of Cuttack. Clive sent towards the end of 1765 Mir Zainul Abidin¹² to Janaji. The wakil reached Nagpur on December 23¹³ after "a painful journey,"¹⁴ for on the way he had been wrongfully seized and detained¹⁵ by a number of chiefs eager "to extort from him both money and effects."¹⁶ On December 26, he obtained an audience of Janaji, and offered to him the presents he had brought from Calcutta. The next day, the wakil had a long conference with Janaji. The latter demanded 48 lakhs of rupees in lieu of the chauth of Bengal, but said not a word about Cuttack. In subsequent deliberations too he evaded this question carefully. Evidently the Maratha chief was not ready to consider any proposals regarding Cuttack, until the chauth of Bengal was finally agreed upon. At last he agreed to send his own agent Udepuri Gussain, to the Governor "to bring the business of the subah to a conclusion,"¹⁷ whereupon Mir Zainul Abidin obtained leave to depart on the 27th of January, 1767.¹⁸

In February when Clive had left India a letter¹⁹ was received from Janaji, wherein the latter informed the Governor of Udepuri Gussain's departure for Calcutta, and asked for the immediate payment of the chauth on the following grounds. Firstly, "he had not received the bills and money which Cossim Ally sent him nor granted him an asylum in the subah of Cuttack which he had desired." Secondly, "he had made no movements to prejudice the English." Thirdly, "two years and upwards had elapsed without the receipt of any money." Fourthly, "On account of the opulence of Bengal

¹² Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 50.

¹³ December 28, according to Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 49.

¹⁴ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 142.

¹⁵ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 49.

¹⁶ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 143.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 105.

¹⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 23, 1767.

the payment of the largest sums was easy." Lastly, "on the strength of the English security" he had borrowed twenty lakhs of rupees from the bankers of Nagpur. Januji desired the Governor to send "as large sums as possible" through Udepuri Gusain, and concluded his letter with the assurance, "Everything might be settled at Calcutta by Oudipoory Gossaine, and whatever engagements he should enter into he should abide by Oudipoory Gossaine is the only person acting between us; whatever he should settle or say, will be agreeable to both parties. Consider this letter in the place of a thousand." Thereupon Verelst who was no less anxious than Clive "to promote the negotiation respecting the cession of Cuttack"²⁰ promptly despatched a letter²¹ to Udepuri Gusain asking him to proceed²² to Calcutta without delay. In March the Governor heard from the latter that he was shortly coming to him "to deliberate on every measure for the establishment of a firm and lasting union between the English sardars and Raja Januji, his master."²³ As, however, Mir Zainul Abidin had not yet arrived from Nagpur, Udepuri Gusain had to postpone²⁴ his meeting with the Governor for the present, and sent early in April his 'munshi' to acquaint the latter with all the details concerning his mission.²⁵

Mir Zainul Abidin reached²⁶ Murshidabad on April 17, and as Verelst was himself to go there shortly to attend the annual "Punyaha," it was decided²⁷ by the Select Committee.

²⁰ Verelst's letter to Court, March 17, 1767.

²¹ Letter to Udepuri Gusain, Feb. 23, 1767.

(Vide Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 67).

²² Udepuri Gusain was then at Cuttack, as his letter received on Feb. 27 shows. (Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 73.)

²³ Trans. R. 1761-68, No. 115.

²⁴ Trans. R. 1761-68, No. 73.

²⁵ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 191.

²⁶ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 229.

²⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., April 30, 1767.

to hold the conferences with Januji's wakil at Murshidabad in the presence of the Nawab and Muhammad Riza Khan. On May 1 a long letter was received from Januji repenting his old demand for money.²⁶ Januji, however, strongly professed his desire for "a durable alliance" with the English, and assured the Governor for the first time that he had not the least objection to the proposal regarding the cession of Cuttack, which he had left to the decision of his plenipotentiary.

The unusually friendly attitude²⁷ adopted by Januji at this time was due to a number of circumstances. In the first place, Sheo Bhat on being successfully repulsed from Orissa²⁸ by Bhavani Pandit had recently escaped²⁹ to Bengal, and was now at Calcutta.³⁰ Januji, therefore, did not like to displease the Governor immediately, as he wanted for the security of his own dominions that Sheo Bhat should be seized and surrendered to him.³¹ In the second place, the unexpected depuration of Mir Zainul Abidin seems to have given Januji a pleasant surprise,³² and he cherished the belief in consequence that the English would shortly settle "the affair of the chaauth."³³ He was, therefore, eager to show his attachment to the English in every way possible.³⁴ In the third place, as Januji at this time urgently needed money to pay up³⁵ the arrears due to his troops, he was not unwilling to treat for the cession of Cuttack, if his demands for the chaauth were also at the same time fully satisfied. In the last place, the friendship of the

²⁶ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 235.

²⁹ Letter from Verelst to Court, March 17, 1767, "... he (Januji) seems well disposed to cultivate our friendship."

³⁰ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 62.

³¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 89.

³² Beng. Sel. Com., April 30, 1767.

³³ Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 2.

³⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 23, 1767.

³⁵ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 50.

³⁶ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 235.

³⁷ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 236.

English was deemed particularly valuable at the present juncture when Ahmad Shah Abdali was in India, and not only Januji but Raghunath Rao³⁸ and Nana Fadnis³⁹ also wrote friendly letters with the object of forming an alliance against the common enemy, and they even sent an agent to Bengal for this purpose.⁴⁰

Having reached Murshidabad early in May,⁴¹ Verelst had several informal conferences⁴² with Udepuri Gusain as well as Mir Zainul Abidin.⁴³ The whole question of the chauth was finally discussed by the Governor at a special meeting⁴⁴ attended by the Nawab Saifuddaulah and Muhammad Riza Khan. Januji's Vakil demanded sixteen lakhs of rupees in lieu of chauth, and in connection with the question of Cuttack he pleaded that he had "no authority to deliver up the country without further instructions from his master."⁴⁵ Verelst offered to pay at the most thirteen lakhs on condition that "one-half of the first year's rent be paid on the immediate cession of the soubah, and the other half as soon as we are in full possession."⁴⁶ As, however, there could be no final agreement on the total amount to be paid for the cession of Cuttack, the matter was eventually referred to Januji who was assured by the Governor that the English would always hold themselves responsible for the due payment of the stipulated amount.⁴⁷

After a prolonged silence which was as surprising to the Governor, as it was embarrassing to Udepuri Gusain, Januji

³⁸ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 51.

³⁹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 145.

⁴⁰ Nilu Dhar Pandit was the Vakil sent by Raghunath Rao to Bengal. (Ibid. Cop. I. 1765-67, No. 43.)

⁴¹ Cop. I. 1765-67, No. 160.

⁴² Beng. Sel. Com., July 6, 1767.

⁴³ Beng. Sel. Com., July 14, 1767.

⁴⁴ Trans. I. 1765-67, No. 157.

⁴⁵ Letter from Verelst to Sel. Com., June 28, 1767.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Cop. I. 1765-67, No. 170.

Early in December Verelst asked⁵⁸ Muhammad Riza Khan to bring Udepuri Gusain with him to Calcutta in order that the negotiations might be resumed ; and Mir Zainul Abidin was also desired⁵⁹ to accompany the Vakil. In the meantime friendly letters were received from Januji, requesting the Governor " to send a person of approved fidelity with a treaty sanctified by the sign manual of the King of England, attested by the Governor's signature, sworn to on the sacred pages of the Evangelists, and solemnized by invocation."⁶⁰ From these letters⁶¹ it is easy to guess Januji's attitude in regard to the present negotiations. His main point was that the English must abide by the promises⁶² they had formerly made to him in the strongest of terms that all the arrears of the Bengal chauth would be paid in accordance with the old treaties and engagements, if he did not help Mir Qasim in his war with the English. He urged that Mir Zainul Abidin had represented to him at Nagpur that under the old agreement⁶³ between Alivardi Khan and Raghuji Bhonsle twelve lakhs of rupees had to be paid as the chauth of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, and that if he now wanted the stipulated chauth, he was required by the treaty itself to cede Orissa to the Nawab of Bengal. In reply to this contention, Januji vehemently urged that it was a novel interpretation of the aforesaid treaty, and must have been put forward by Mir Zainul Abidin out of some hidden motives of his own. He emphasized the fact that the cession of Orissa had never been made a condition precedent to the payment of the chauth. He argued, " Alivardi Khan, notwithstanding all that power and greatness which he was master of, made no scruple about paying twelve lakhs besides presents, remitting them through a banker at Benares

⁵⁸ Trans. I. 1766-67. Nos. 225 and 227.

⁵⁹ Trans. I. 1766-67. No. 227 A.

⁶⁰ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 447.

⁶¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, Nos. 447-452.

⁶² Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 10. 1768.

Januji's reference was to the assurances given by Vansittart.

⁶³ Trans. R. 1767-68, Nos. 447-8.

without laying the least claim to Orissa."⁶⁴ In short, Januji's contention was that the cession of Cuttack could not be made a condition of the payment of the chauth to which he was duly entitled under the existing treaties.

An examination of the old treaties,⁶⁵ however, revealed the fact that Mir Zainul Abidin's argument regarding the chauth having been originally agreed upon for all the three subahs of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa was technically valid, although it could not be denied that the province of Cuttack had been virtually⁶⁶ ceded to the Marathas by Alivardi Khan.⁶⁷ The treaty under the seal of Raghuji Bhonsle delivered to Alivardi Khan contains⁶⁸ the following, "On condition of the pence I am to receive twelve lakhs of rupees yearly including everything, the payments to be made agreeably to the statement drawn up. Neither I, nor any of my posterity, nor other potent sardars in alliance with me, shall remain in these three subahs dependent on the Nawab Alivardi Khan or in any way molest the zamindars or have any concerns with them." This was confirmed in the treaty⁶⁹ under the seal of Januji delivered to Mir Jafar. The treaty under the seal of Alivardi Khan delivered to Raghuji Bhonsle repeats the same point in the following words, "And I agree from the 18th day of the month Zul-Qad in the 4th year of the reign of Ahmad Shah to pay annually the sum of twelve lakhs of

⁶⁴ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 450.

⁶⁵ The originals of these treaties seem to have been lost during the war with Mir Qasim. Only copies could be procured by Verelst from the Record Office at Murshidabad. The original of the Treaty between Januji and Mir Jafar was, however, found in the possession of Raja Durlabhi Ram. (Trans. R. 1769, No. 1).

⁶⁶ According to Sardesai (*vide* his *Marathi Riyasat, Madhya Vibhag*, Vol. II, p. 492 etc.) the cession of Cuttack was one of the actual terms of the treaty between Raghuji Bhonsle and Alivardi Khan.

⁶⁷ A copy of the treaty between Januji and Alivardi Khan concerning the cession of Cuttack could not be obtained by the Governor. (Abs. I. 1766-67, Nos. 1-2.)

⁶⁸ Trans. R. 1769, No. 1. A.

⁶⁹ Trans. R. 1769, No. 1. B.

rupees on account of the chauth for the subahs of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, to be remitted in two *qists* every six months to Benares either through Jagat Seth or the Maharaja Sarup Chand, as he (Raghuji) shall judge proper ; on this condition that neither Raghuji nor his posterity, nor any Marathas, nor any other chief in alliance with him shall remain in or enter these subahs. Nor shall they in any manner molest or have any concerns with the zamindars thereof."⁷⁰

Negotiations were resumed⁷¹ at Calcutta in January,⁷² 1768, when Muhammad Riza Khan arrived there with Udepuri Gusain and Mir Zainul Abidin. The Governor had a number of conferences⁷³ with them, and discussed the terms offered by Januji. Udepuri Gusain explained that his master would not agree to cede Cuttack on any other terms than the annual payment of sixteen lakhs of rupees, to be accounted for from the time of the Company's assumption of the Diwani of Bengal. The Governor protested against the unreasonableness of the demand of the arrears, though he was prepared to pay the amount asked for from the date of the actual evacuation of the province by Januji. Udepuri Gusain, however, laid stress on the promise made to his master in 1763 by Mr. Vansittart regarding the payment of all the arrears of the chauth, and he also referred to the assurance given by Clive that "whenever the treaty should be concluded with them, the annual sum stipulated for should commence from the time the Company were invested with the Dewannee of the provinces."⁷⁴ After prolonged discussions he was at last persuaded to agree that the revenue already collected by the Marathas in Cuttack during the period following the Company's acceptance of the Diwani "should be set against the annual

⁷⁰ Trans. R. 1769, No. 1. C.

⁷¹ Letter to Court, Feb. 9, 1768.

⁷² Muhammad Riza Khan could not leave Murshidabad earlier than the 8th of January. (Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 68.)

⁷³ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 10, 1768.

⁷⁴ Letter to Court, Feb. 29, 1768.

affairs."⁷⁵ The draft of the treaty finally agreed upon was as follows :—

" I, Syeful Doulah,⁷⁶ hereby agree that on condition of the cession of Orissa, the forts of the Barrabutty and all appendages and dependencies thereof and the renunciation of all pretensions to the chout and every other demand, I will pay the annual sum of sixteen lacks of rupees

" Agreement entered into by the Hon'ble Company as guarantees of the faithful performance of the above treaty. We will be responsible for the payment of the sixteen lacks."⁷⁷

At their meeting of February 10, the Select Committee formally approved of the terms of the aforesaid agreement reached between the Governor and Udepuri Gusain,⁷⁸ and on February 19, the Governor wrote to Januji informing him of the proposed agreement,⁷⁹ and offered to depute a Vakil to Nagpur after Cuttack was ceded and the treaty duly ratified.⁸⁰

The considerations which led the Governor and the Select Committee to acquiesce in the proposals of Januji's Vakil may be briefly analysed here. In the first place, as Mr. Vansittart and Lord Clive had officially acknowledged⁸¹ the right of Januji to the chauth of Bengal, its payment could not long be withheld without breach of engagement. In the second place, Clive had strongly recommended before his departure from India the very terms which Verelst under the instructions of his predecessor proposed to Udepuri Gusain. Clive's advice was, " We shall pay sixteen lacks upon condi-

⁷⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb 10, 1768.

⁷⁶ Saifuddaulah, Nawab of Bengal.

⁷⁷ Copies of the treaty and the agreement are embodied in the minutes of Sel. Com. 1768, Vol. I, p. 88.

⁷⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 10, 1768.

⁷⁹ Abs. I. 1766-71, No. 16.

⁸⁰ Abs. I. 1766-71, No. 17.

⁸¹ Letter to Court, Feb. 29, 1768.

tion that he appoints the Company zamindar of the Balasore and Cuttack provinces."⁸² In the third place, no financial loss was apprehended from the proposed agreement, as it was understood that sixteen, or seventeen lakhs of rupees might be easily collected from Cuttack every year.⁸³ The Select Committee thus assured the Directors of this fact, "We have reason to believe that under your government, and the immediate inspection of your servants, they (the revenues) may in time amount to, if not exceed, the annual tribute demanded."⁸⁴ In the fourth place, an amicable settlement with Januji was likely to remove "at once every pretence of the Marathas for disturbing the peace and tranquillity of these provinces."⁸⁵ In the fifth place, an alliance with Januji was bound to be of advantage to the Company in any future struggle with the Marathas.⁸⁶ In the last place, the acquisition of Cuttack was, as the Directors were informed, "a step which will complete the chain of your influence and dominions from the banks of the Caramnassa to the farthest extremity of the Coast of Coromandal, a measure that must tend so greatly to the preservation of both settlements by the mutual support which at all times it will enable them to give to each other."⁸⁷ In fact, this was the primary consideration which had led Clive to commence negotiations with Januji for the cession of Cuttack which he was anxious to obtain even at the risk of financial loss, for he told the Select Committee, "Whatever the deficiency may be, it will be overbalanced by the security and convenience we shall enjoy of a free and open passage by land to and from Madras, all the countries between the two Presidencies being under our influence."⁸⁸ It was in view of

⁸² Beng. Sel. Com., Jan. 16, 1767.

⁸³ Beng. Sel. Com., July 14, 1767.

⁸⁴ Letter to Court, Feb. 29, 1768.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., Jan. 16, 1767.

⁸⁷ Letter to Court, Feb. 29, 1768.

⁸⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., Jan. 16, 1767.

these arguments that the Select Committee thought, "The Company will be gainers every way by such a treaty."⁸⁰

The Governor who had anxiously looked forward to an early ratification of the proposed treaty was disillusioned before long, as he gradually realised that the Maratha Chief did not seriously mean to evacuate Cuttack, and that he was merely scheming to extort some money from the English in lieu of the arrears of the chauth. Januji now appointed⁸¹ Sambhaji Ganesh as Subahdar of Orissa in place of Bhavani Pandit with the object of bringing the negotiations regarding the chauth to a speedy conclusion.⁸² It is highly significant that an army of 20,000 horse was sent to Orissa at this time.⁸³ Was this show of force intended to be a warning to the authorities at Calcutta? It is no less significant that the new Governor of Cuttack made no mention about the cession of this province in his letters to Verelst, and insisted on the payment of the Bengal chauth "as a preliminary measure."⁸⁴ Udepuri Gusain heard nothing from Januji and regretfully confessed⁸⁵ his ignorance about the latter's intentions. Evidently he had incurred the displeasure of his master for having prematurely consented to the proposal relating to the cession of Cuttack, because early in July the Governor received a letter from Januji, asking for the immediate dismissal of his Vakil.⁸⁶ Finally, when Januji virtually threatened⁸⁷ to invade Bengal, if the remittance of the chauth was further delayed, or if it was made conditional on his cession of Cuttack, all hopes of an understanding with him were shattered. He sent Lala Anand

⁸⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., Feb. 10, 1768.

⁸¹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 112.

⁸² Trans. R. 1768, No. 213.

⁸³ Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 81.

⁸⁴ Trans. R. 1768, Nos. 149, 213, 221.

⁸⁵ Trans. R. 1768, No. 214.

⁸⁶ Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 73.

⁸⁷ Trans. R. 1768, No. 208.

Rup to Calcutta to replace Udepuri Gusain. It is interesting to note that the new envoy was commissioned "to suppress double-dealing and reduce the ancient treaties and past engagements to a proper and acceptable form."⁹⁷

Verelst took no notice of the threatening demands for money, nor did he care to reply to the letters of Sambhaji Ganesh.⁹⁸ Udepuri Gusain who had been sent back to Murshidabad asked in vain for permission to return to Nagpur, and bitterly complained that Muhammad Riza Khan had modified the articles of the proposed treaty in such a form that his master was bound to take exception thereto.⁹⁹ The Governor, however, paid no heed to his representations, and sent the treaty as finally drafted by Muhammad Riza Khan to Januji through Gopalpuri Gusain,¹⁰⁰ a colleague of Udepuri Gusain. Verelst apparently still hoped that the Maratha Chief might be persuaded to listen to the English proposals in a spirit of compromise.

After waiting for several months, Verelst heard from Januji towards the middle of October¹⁰¹ that he had no objection to the proposed agreement, if it were modified in a manner acceptable to him.¹⁰² This sudden change in Januji's attitude appears to have been due to the embassy of Gopalpuri Gusain who tried his utmost¹⁰³ to bring about a rapprochement between his master and the English. Januji told the Vakil, "I am always desirous of friendship and union; but as this treaty has been on foot for eight years, I have sustained great loss. I placed entire confidence in the letters, the English sent me during the war with Mir Qasim Ali Khan, assuring me that the sums would be delivered on condition that I would not give that Nawab any assistance.

⁹⁷ Trans. R. 1768, No. 208.

⁹⁸ Trans. R. 1768, No. 212.

⁹⁹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 234.

¹⁰⁰ Trans. R. 1768, Nos. 221, 296.

¹⁰¹ Trans. R. 1768, Nos. 285-287.

¹⁰² Trans. R. 1768, No. 287.

¹⁰³ Abs. R. 1767-71, p. 46.

Those assurances were repeated by Mir Zainul Abidin Khan who was sent by Lord Clive during his administration with presents and letters from His Lordship. His Lordship declared that he had no interested views for the subah of Orissa, and sent me repeated letters to this purpose, but nothing has appeared since but craft and guile. If this had not been the case, by our wise counsels and unanimity our names would have been celebrated throughout Hindustan as well as in the Deccan, and the valour of the English nation would have been familiar to every ear in the known world. Now that the English sardars are desirous of friendship and union, I am perfectly agreeable to this ; but the present treaty requires many stipulations in order that no future obstacles may arise and that it may be observed by our posterity."¹⁰⁴

The " memorial of demands " sent by Januji was soon obtained¹⁰⁵ from Udepuri Gusnin, and was later considered¹⁰⁶ by the Select Committee at their meeting of November 29. It is interesting to note that Januji was reluctant to rely on a treaty signed by the Nawab of Bengal, or by the English Governor, and that he demanded one signed and sealed by the King of England. The reason for this demand was thus stated by Sambhaji Ganesh, " The gentlemen (i.e., the Governors) are appointed for three years or 1000 days ; in case a negotiation is carried on with them on account of some being displaced and others succeeding them, it will not appear what sort of an alliance subsists between the English and the Marathas."¹⁰⁷

The principal demands¹⁰⁸ of Januji were as follows :—

1. The temple of Jagannath at Puri shall continue to remain in his possession.

¹⁰⁴ Trans. R. 1768, No. 288.

¹⁰⁵ Abs. l. 1766-71, No. 121.

¹⁰⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., Nov. 29, 1768.

¹⁰⁷ Trans. R. 1768, No. 296.

¹⁰⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., Nov. 29, 1768.

2. The duties and taxes paid by the pilgrims shall be collected by his own officials.
3. The English shall promise to help him with money and arms, if he required it. He on his part was willing to promise similar assistance to the English in their hour of need.
4. In addition to the stipulated amount of sixteen lakhs of rupees, the customary presents of elephants, fine cloths, jewels, etc. shall also be given to him.
5. An extra lakh of rupees shall be paid for the *mutasaddis* of the collections and for the army.
6. The promised amount shall be paid in two instalments in Murshidabad *siccas*.
7. The payment shall be accounted for from the 1st of October, 1765.
8. In addition to a duly authenticated treaty to be procured from Europe, a similar treaty shall be executed by Mr. Verelst, and witnessed by Saifuddaulah, Muhammad Riza Khan, and others.
9. A similar treaty shall be executed by Saifuddaulah.
10. The chaukis on the borders of Orissa shall not be interfered with.
11. The guns lying at Sambhalpur shall be transported to Chatter Ghir.
12. The treaty after being duly signed shall be sent to him through Udepuri Gusain.
13. The amount already agreed upon shall be increased at least by two lakhs.
14. At least two years' dues shall be paid in advance.

As most of the aforesaid terms appeared to be "too extravagant"¹⁰⁰ to the Governor and the Select Committee, they

¹⁰⁰ Letter to Court, Jan. 6, 1769.

proposed the following modifications, and resolved¹¹⁰ in their meeting of December 13 to communicate these to Januji for his opinion :—

1. Januji's agent would be allowed to look after the due performance of religious ceremonies in the temple of Jagannath at Puri, but he would be liable to punishment for misbehaviour.
2. The customs duties and other taxes paid by the pilgrims would be collected by an agent of the Nawab.
3. Mutual assistance would be given, only when it was convenient.
4. The additional presents asked for would be given, if similar presentation was made to the Nawab.
5. No extra payment would be made beyond the promised amount of sixteen lakhs of rupees.
6. There was no objection to the sixth demand.
7. As it had been formerly agreed upon that the revenues of Cuttack collected from the 1st of October, 1765, were to be brought to the Nawab's credit, Januji would allow a strict scrutiny to be made into the accounts of the revenue collections.
8. There was no objection to the eighth demand.
9. There was no objection to the ninth demand.
10. There was no objection to the tenth demand.
11. The eleventh demand was not considered by the Committee to be seriously insisted upon by Januji.
12. A Company's servant would accompany Udepuri Gusain to Nagpur with the treaty.
13. Not more than sixteen lakhs of rupees would be paid to Januji.

¹¹⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., Dec. 13, 1768.

14. Two years' dues would be paid in advance, only if it could be conveniently done.

From the minutes of the Select Committee it is apparent that the authorities at Calcutta were anxious at this time to conclude a treaty with Januji from purely political considerations. The war with Haidar Ali was still going on in the South, and the President and Council of Fort St. George pressed for assistance, stating that there was little prospect of gaining any advantage over the enemy.¹¹¹ They gave the alarming news that Haidar Ali was trying to enlist the support of the Peshwa Madhav Rao who was said to be determined¹¹² to quarrel with the English, and who was likely to enter into an alliance with Haidar Ali against the English.¹¹³ The likelihood of a junction¹¹⁴ between Madhav Rao and Haidar Ali increased the anxiety of the authorities at Calcutta. They, therefore, regarded¹¹⁵ an immediate agreement with Januji as the best means of preventing Madhav Rao from marching to the South in aid of Haidar Ali. The Governor and the Select Committee thus subsequently explained their object to the Directors, "Our principal object of bringing about a treaty with him (Januji) was to divert Madhav Rao from entering the Carnatic to the assistance of Haider Ally."¹¹⁶ It is needless to point out that the view taken by the Calcutta Government was in the main correct, for in any war with the Peshwa the alliance of Januji whose jealousy¹¹⁷ of the latter's power was well known was bound to be of the greatest benefit

¹¹¹ Letter from President and Council of Fort St. George in the Secret Department, Nov. 11, 1768.

¹¹² Letter from Mr. C. Broome, Resident at the Court of Peshwa, Nov. 6, 1768.

¹¹³ Letter from Mr. C. Broome, Resident at the Court of the Peshwa, Nov. 14, 1768.

¹¹⁴ Letter from President and Council of Bombay, Nov. 9, 1768.

¹¹⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., Dec. 13, 1768.

¹¹⁶ Letter to Court, April 6, 1769.

¹¹⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., Dec. 13, 1768.

"His well-known jealousy of . . . Mahadaverow . . . must secure him in our interests."

to the English.¹¹⁸ Besides, even if the threatened war with the Peshwa did not immediately come about, Januji's alliance was necessary¹¹⁹ so long as the war was in progress in the Deccan. An understanding with the latter would not only cause the desired "diversion of the Maratha power,"¹²⁰ and lead to¹²¹ the "repose and security" of Bengal, but would also enable the authorities to render the most effectual and expeditious support to Madras through Cuttack.¹²²

The protracted negotiations now seemed to be nearing a satisfactory conclusion, and the Directors also expressed their wholehearted approval of the policy of the Calcutta Government in the following words, "We think it both equity and sound policy to pay them their chout, and shall much approve it, if it can be done on the terms you mention, of their ceding to us their possessions in Orissa, which would join our Bengal possessions to the Circars, and would afford us the means of preventing any hostile attempts of an European enemy who might land in that part of Orissa."¹²³

Contrary to all expectations, however, Januji sent ordinary letters and formal messages through his wakil without indicating any desire to ratify the proposed treaty.¹²⁴ Eventually the negotiations were completely terminated,¹²⁵ for in the early months of 1769 Januji remained preoccupied with his plans against Madhav Rao, and during the summer there was an open rupture between them. In March it was first

¹¹⁸ Letter to President and Council of Fort St. George in the Secret Department, Dec. 17, 1768.

Letter to President and Council of Bombay, Dec. 17, 1768.

¹¹⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., Dec. 23, 1768.

¹²⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., Dec. 13, 1768.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Beng. Sel. Com., Dec. 17, 1768.

¹²³ Letter from Court, March 16, 1768.

¹²⁴ Cop. I. 1770, No. 30.

¹²⁵ Nothing was heard from the Maratha side except occasional demands for money. (Trans. R. 1769, No. 12.)

definitely reported that Madhav Rao was bent¹²⁶ on crushing the power of Januji, consequently the Select Committee thought it prudent to suspend the negotiation with the latter for the present.¹²⁷ Verelst wrote to Col. Smith on March 21, "The very critical situation of the Company's affairs on the Coast compels us to suspend our negotiation with Janojee."¹²⁸ The Governor was apparently not prepared to be needlessly embroiled in a quarrel with the Peshwa on behalf of an uncertain ally; and he decided not to form an alliance with Januji, until Madhav Rao actually threatened to attack the Carnatic.¹²⁹ He thought it "highly impolitic at this juncture to continue the negotiations" with Januji, for, as he wrote to the Directors, "his fate must actually be decided even before we could help him against the Peshwa."¹³⁰ The Madras authorities also deprecated¹³¹ the idea of an alliance with Januji in the present state of affairs when war seemed to be imminent between the latter and the Peshwa.

Januji's relations with Madhav Rao had lately become so critical¹³² that he had to make repeated appeals¹³³ to Shah Alam for "a general union and confederacy" against the Peshwa. Januji represented that "instigated by his inveterate enmity and long subsisting jealousy," Madhav Rao had "invaded the patrimonial territories of His Majesty's bounden servant and vassal," and in contravention of "the most sacred engagements" had "circumvented him by wiles and strata-

¹²⁶ Letter to President and Council of Fort St. George in the Secret Department, March 21, 1769.

¹²⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., March 21, 1769.

¹²⁸ Letter to Col. R. Smith, March 21, 1769.

¹²⁹ Letter to President and Council of Fort St. George in the Secret Department, March 21, 1769.

¹³⁰ Letter to Court, April 6, 1769.

¹³¹ Letter from President and Council of Fort St. George in the Secret Department, March 20, 1769.

¹³² Papers of news received, March 7, 1769.

¹³³ Beng. Sel. Com., March 21, 1769.

gems and laid his possessions waste."¹³⁴ The authorities at Calcutta, however, maintained a strictly neutral attitude, and afforded no help to Januji in his war with the Peshwa. In May, Sambhaji Ganesh strongly urged the Governor to assist his master "at this critical juncture," and offered to send an agent to Calcutta to negotiate with him on this subject.¹³⁵ Verelst declined¹³⁶ to promise any assistance on the plea that peace would soon be concluded between Januji and the Peshwa. Early in June the report of Januji's success against the Peshwa was received from Col. Smith;¹³⁷ and about a month later the President and Council of Fort St. George intimated that peace had been concluded between the two parties.¹³⁸

Hopes of a settlement regarding Cuttack revived after the establishment of peace between Madhav Rao and Januji, and Verelst once more made friendly overtures to Sambhaji Ganesh, and informed him of his desire to send an English Vakil "to prove the sincerity of his heart, to strengthen the bond of friendship existing between the Raja and the English, and to provide for the proper settlement of every business."¹³⁹ Sambhaji Ganesh, however, gave no reply to the Governor's letter, evidently because his master had by now decided not to cede Cuttack on any terms. Reminders¹⁴⁰ were sent to him in vain. Finally, when Udepuri Gussain intimated¹⁴¹ his decision to go back¹⁴² to Nagpur, the Governor despaired of reaching an agreement with the Maratha Chief. In his letter to the Vakil

¹³⁴ Letter from Januji to the King. (*Vide* Beng. Sel. Com., March 21, 1769.)

¹³⁵ Cop. R. 1769, No. 22.

¹³⁶ Cop. I. 1769-70, No. 23.

¹³⁷ Beng. Sel. Com. June, 8, 1768.

¹³⁸ Beng. Sel. Com. July 8, 1768.

¹³⁹ Cop. I. 1769-70, No. 32.

¹⁴⁰ Cop. I. 1769-70, No. 56.

¹⁴¹ Cop. R. 1769, No. 97.

¹⁴² From the Dastak granted by the Governor, it appears that Udepuri Gussain had a large retinue:—" Savars—50, Bargandazes—200, Camels—30, Mules—60, Oxen—60, Palkis—4, Chaupalas—25, Bahlis—4, Servants—400." (*Vide* Cop. I. 1769-70, No. 94.)

he still expressed the hope that¹⁴³ on reaching Nagpur the latter would endeavour to strengthen the foundations of the friendship between his master and the English. After sending a non-committal reply¹⁴⁴ beforehand, Sambhaji Ganesh at last plainly told the Governor that as peace had been established with Madhav Rao "through the valour and good conduct of his master," there remained "no occasion for any new negotiations or deputies."¹⁴⁵ Even the usual neighbourly relations seemed to be difficult to maintain, when presumably at the instance of his master Shambhaji Ganesh refused to allow an English army to proceed to Bengal through Cuttack on the plea that there was scarcity in his province, and that the English troops might plunder the country while passing through it.¹⁴⁶

In his farewell letter¹⁴⁷ to the Council, written on the eve of his departure from India, Verelst thus expressed his disappointment at the failure of his long and wearisome negotiations with Januji, "I once flattered myself that the former (Januji) would have acceded to a treaty for the cession of Orissa, but his evasion and artful behaviour has convinced me that the Maharattas will never desert their old and characteristic manners. After three years of negotiations, much trouble, and some expense, no progress has been made towards a conclusion ; on the contrary, he has studiously avoided any declaration of his sentiments." It is amusing to find that Januji recriminated with equal bitterness against "the dilatory, hesitating policy"¹⁴⁸ of the English in the following¹⁴⁹ words, "Udepuri Gusain has for the last five years been praising the English sardars for their uprightness, but they have not as yet given a proof that they possess that quality."

¹⁴³ Cop. I. 1769-70, No. 74.

¹⁴⁴ Cop. R. 1769, No. 82.

¹⁴⁵ Trans. R. 1769, No. 161.

¹⁴⁶ Cop. I. 1769-70, No. 117.

¹⁴⁷ Letter to Mr. John Cartier, and the Council at Fort William, December 16, 1769.

¹⁴⁸ Trans. R. and I. 1770, No. 23.

¹⁴⁹ Trans. R. and I. 1770, No. 240.

Embittered by disappointment, Verelst naturally ascribed the failure of the negotiations to "the artful character"¹⁵⁰ of the Marathas, but there are intelligible reasons why the proposed scheme for the cession of Cuttack ultimately fell through. In the first place, the refusal of the English to assist him against the Peshwa seems to have given the greatest offence to Januji, and it was chiefly in disgust and pique that he abruptly stopped all negotiations with them after coming to terms with the Peshwa. He bitterly complained afterwards that in his hour of need the English had failed "to comfort his heart by sending help," and reminded the Governor in bitter sarcasm that "the touchstone of true friendship is misfortune and danger."¹⁵¹ In the second place, being badly in need of money, Januji was not prepared to part with Cuttack without receiving payment of three years' rent in advance.¹⁵² As, however, the Select Committee could not readily accede to this term for obvious reasons, Januji who had entered into these negotiations entirely from pecuniary considerations saw no particular benefit in losing what he considered to be a valuable possession.¹⁵³ In the third place, Januji had entertained the proposal regarding the cession of Cuttack at a time when being in alliance with Raghunath Rao he had no danger to apprehend from Poona, but his war with Madhav Rao seems to have convinced him of the strategic importance of Orissa as a base for his reserve forces. This accounts for the fact that in his subsequent correspondence¹⁵⁴ with Cartier, Januji repeated his demand of the chauth "as settled and established by former Nazims," but scrupulously avoided mentioning his former willingness to cede Cuttack in return. In the last place, Januji had throughout claimed the chauth of Bengal as

¹⁵⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., Dec. 15, 1769.

¹⁵¹ Trans. R. and I., 1770, No. 23.

¹⁵² Beng. Sel. Com., Nov. 29, 1768.

¹⁵³ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 450.

¹⁵⁴ Trans. R. and I., 1770, Nos. 23, 240; Trans. R. 1771, No. 104

a matter of right, and had always been reluctant to accept it as a price for his cession of Cuttack. The absolute unwillingness of the English to pay him the chauth, notwithstanding his repeated reminders for it, was another circumstance which partly accounts for Januji's obstinate refusal to give up Cuttack.

CHAPTER V

THE TREATY OF 1768 WITH THE VAZIR OF OUDH

That Verelst's regime marks an important stage in the growth of the English ascendancy over the Vazir of Oudh has been generally overlooked by historians. Verelst's achievement in respect of his Oudh policy is of more than ordinary interest, inasmuch as he not only averted through personal influence and diplomatic pressure a threatened rupture with Shujauddaulah, but cemented the existing alliance with him by means of a fresh treaty.

Towards the close of 1767 when the Company's troops in Oudh had been partly withdrawn on account of the war with Haidar Ali in the South, alarming reports began to reach Calcutta regarding the views and intentions of the Vazir. In October¹ Col. Smith reported from Allahabad that the Vazir was busily engaged in raising troops, both horse and foot, and was in correspondence with the Marathas, the Jats, the Rohillas, and other powers including Nizam Ali. He warned² the Select Committee, "If we collect all these circumstances into one point of view, I think there appears but too just grounds for suspicion of the Nabob's fidelity to his engagements with us."

Col. Smith had evidently serious apprehensions of an alliance between the Marathas and the Vazir against the Company. His suspicions were excited by certain letters which had recently passed between the Marathas and the Vazir, and were all the more confirmed by a letter which Malhar Rao's widow had recently written to her vakil. These letters³ which Col.

¹ Letters from Col. R. Smith, October 17 and 19, 1767.

² Beng. Sel. Com., November 3, 1767.

³ Letter from Madhu Rao to the Vazir. (Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 393 A.)

Smith forwarded to Calcutta amply reveal that the Marathas were at this time eager to gain the alliance of the Vazir. We find Madhu Rao's vakil actually offering to the Vazir the support of his master, and referring significantly to the general rumour that the Vazir was not on good terms with the English. From Malhar Rao's widow's letter to her vakil it appears that the Vazir had secretly written to Januji "urging him to assemble forces to advance and settle things on their former footing."⁴ With reference to this letter Col. Smith represented, "If the contents of this letter are facts, there no longer remains a doubt of Sujah Daolah's intentions."⁵

Verelst and the Select Committee, however, did not take the representations of Col. Smith seriously. They were of the opinion that the time had not yet arrived when the Vazir could attempt to carry into execution any of his alleged anti-English projects, and that gratitude, policy, and necessity would for some years longer bind him strongly to the English interests. In support of this view, the Select Committee wrote⁶ to Col. Smith that the parties whom the Vazir could wish to engage in a general confederacy were either too remote by situation, too distrustful of each other, too jealous of him, or too feeble in themselves. And, with regard to the levies mentioned by Col. Smith, the Select Committee further urged, "So far from rendering himself formidable Shujah Doulah has not yet raised the number of troops which we would wish to see maintained for the protection of his country and without which he will ever require the assistance of our troops con-

Letter from the Vazir to Madhu Rao. (Trans. R. 1767-68. No. 393 B.)

Letter from Babuji Pandit to the Vazir. (Trans. R. 1767-68. No. 428 A.)

Letter from Vazir to Babuji Pandit. (Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 428 B.)

⁴ Letter from Malhar Rao's widow to her Vakil. (Beng. Sel. Com., November 3, 1767.)

⁵ Letter from Col. R. Smith, October 19, 1767.

⁶ Letter to Col. R. Smith, November 3, 1767.

trary to the spirit and intention of the orders repeatedly transmitted by our Hon'ble masters."

It is interesting to note that although the authorities refused to believe⁷ that the Vazir was preparing for a rupture with the English, they decided to keep a watchful eye on the former's conduct and at the same time avoid the appearance of suspicion and distrust. They directed Col. Smith to observe the Vazir's conduct with circumspection, and ordered the First Brigade also to remain in their present position until the least apprehension of danger should exist on that side.⁸

That the Vazir had lately begun to make considerable additions to his forces was known to Verelst. In fact, the latter had himself⁹ encouraged and permitted him to augment¹⁰ his "weak and ill-appointed"¹¹ army in view of the danger from the Abdali and Mir Qasim. We find the Vazir reporting as early as April that "by the favour of God" he had now "a chosen troop" of 30,000 horse and foot, and was still making fresh levies.¹² After the disappearance of the Abdali menace, however, there remained no ostensible justification for the enlargement of his army, but it appears that the Governor was aware of the Vazir's ambition to annex the Rohilla country¹³ and Bundelkhand.¹⁴ It must be stated, however, that Verelst did not encourage his

⁷ Letter to Court, December 16, 1767.

"It is unlikely that he will think of fighting the English."

⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., November 3, 1767.

Letter to Court, December 16, 1767.

It had been decided earlier to send the First Brigade to the South, but the Select Committee evidently changed their opinion on the representation of Col. Smith (*vide* his letter, Oct. 16, 1767).

⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., November 3, 1767.

¹⁰ Trans. I. 1766-67, Nos. 95, 110, etc.

¹¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 269.

¹² Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 223.

¹³ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 108.

¹⁴ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 293. *Vide* also Beng. Sel. Com., January 16, 1767.

warlike designs ; on the contrary, he strongly urged him to promote the welfare of his own existing possessions.¹⁵

The war between Haidar Ali and the English as well as the possibility of a Maratha invasion in the North afforded the Vazir a more plausible plea for pushing on his military preparations. In order to justify his levy of troops, he warned the Governor of the danger of a Maratha diversion in Hindustan,¹⁶ and strongly advocated the formation of a league with the Jats and the Rohillas as a precautionary measure. Verelst, however, assured the Vazir in October that although " a lasting alliance with this insidious, grasping people was impossible," the Marathas were not likely to disturb the English for the present.¹⁷ The Vazir reiterated his warning that the Marathas had bad faith, and he asked accordingly permission " to prepare for the quarrel before it commenced." He informed the Governor that he had already directed two or three " potent *Jamadars* " at Delhi to bring each of them a body of one or two hundred horse.¹⁸ In November, the Vazir offered¹⁹ to assemble " near the stirrup of His Majesty " a body of 100,000 men and make a diversion by way of Bundelkhand into the Nizam's territories.

On being repeatedly warned²⁰ by Col. Smith of the obvious danger from the Vazir's military preparations, Verelst at last wrote to the Vazir asking him " to rest from his labours and not to incur superfluous expenses or attend to fruitless preparations."²¹ The Governor and Select Committee, however, assured²² Col. Smith that if the Vazir still continued to augment his forces in defiance of their recent

¹⁵ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 179.

¹⁶ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 379.

¹⁷ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 193.

¹⁸ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 390.

¹⁹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 432.

²⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., November 17 and 29, and December 11, 1767.

²¹ Trans. I. 1766-67, Nos. 202 and 231.

²² Letter to Col. R. Smith, November 17, 1767.

remonstrance, it would then be time to show the latter that they were not blinded by an implicit confidence. For the present they hoped that the Vazir would readily reduce the number of his forces to a bare sufficiency in deference to their wishes.²³ Col. Smith himself had no doubt about the fact that the Vazir meant a rupture with the Company. On the 5th of November he wrote, "I am convinced he bears no goodwill to our nation."²⁴ On the 24th of the same month he again warned, ". . . . he views us rather with the eye of revenge than with the sentiments of gratitude he has pursued just such measures as I should suppose he must adopt preparatory to a rupture with us."²⁵ Verelst still saw no reason to deviate from his favourable opinion with regard to the Vazir's conduct. He informed the Directors also that the Vazir had lately levied troops for the sole purpose of acting in conjunction with the Company's troops in the Deccan, and that he would shortly give a convincing proof of his attachment by a speedy reduction of his forces.²⁶

Meanwhile,²⁷ Col. Smith paid a visit to the Vazir at Fyzabad avowedly in response to the latter's invitation²⁸ but really to make a personal investigation into the informations he had received regarding the latter's conduct, and also to afford him "a handsome opportunity of changing his senti-

²³ Beng. Sel. Com., December 22, 1767.

²⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., November 29, 1767.

²⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., December 11, 1767.

²⁶ Letter to Court, January 5, 1768.

²⁷ Col. Smith proceeded on the 20th December.

²⁸ Letter from the Vazir to Col. R. Smith, received December 3, 1767.

Letter from Col. R. Smith to the Vazir, December 4, 1767.

Beng. Sel. Com., January 27, 1768.

" nor should I ever have proposed an interview had he not himself made this overture. . . . "

(Letter from Col. R. Smith, February 16, 1768.) Beng. Sel. Com., March 2, 1768.

ments."²⁰ The Vazir arranged for a grand display of his troops on the occasion of Col. Smith's visit. He, however, assured the latter that his attachment to the English was inviolable. He also strongly repudiated the false and malicious reports propagated by evil-minded persons, and finally as a token of his friendship he offered Col. Smith a present of two lakhs of rupees. The present was, however, instantly declined by Col. Smith. In their meeting of the 27th of January, 1768, the Select Committee approved³⁰ of the latter's refusal to accept the present, and decided to ask him to make "a very particular enquiry" in respect of the Vazir's alleged designs against the English.³¹

Early in February³² Col. Smith sent a detailed report of the vast improvements made by the Vazir in his army.³³ It appears from his report³⁴ that the Vazir had already completed seven battalions of sepoy, the better part of which had firelocks, the remainder having excellent matchlocks with bayonets. The men who composed the battalions were, according to Col. Smith, chiefly Rajputs and other Hindus. At the time of enrolment the names of the villages and of the parganas where the sepoy resided were noted, and by this means deserters were easily apprehended and severely punished. The sepoy were now better paid, and arrears were no longer allowed to accumulate in the old fashion. The system of Court-martial had also been lately introduced. The Vazir enquired into all military matters himself, and he was said to be so attentive to the minutest details regarding his army, so diligent in the detection, and severe in the punishment of every fraud and misdemeanour that a com-

²⁰ Letter from Col. R. Smith, January 3, 1768.

³⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., January 27, 1768.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Letter from Col. R. Smith, February 6, 1768.

³³ For a detailed account of Shujaudaulah's army *vide* Imadus Saadat (Lucknow Text), pp. 101-103, Tarikh Farahbaksh (Tr. Hoey, II, pp. 7-8), Dow's History of Hindustan, II, p. 357, Gentil's Memoires, pp. 263-4, Beng. Sel. Com., November 3, 1768, etc., etc.

³⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., February 23, 1768.

mandant of one of his battalions had, according to Col. Smith, been recently banished to the Chunar fort for twelve months for having dismissed one sepoy without leave. Another commandant was confined in the same fort for some malpractice concerning the pay of sepoys. Col. Smith admitted in the course of his report, "I did not expect to see his troops so well formed."

The most interesting part of Col. Smith's report is that which relates to the Vazir's remarkable success in the manufacture of fire-arms. The small arms and cannon³⁵ used by the troops were all cast by certain natives of Bengal³⁶ in the Vazir's service, and were, according to Col. Smith, by no means inferior to those used by the Company's forces. The artillery which was being regularly increased was in the charge of a French officer. The latter superintended the construction of the carriages and tumbrils. The firelocks for the sepoys were made after the English model, and Col. Smith found them in every respect equal³⁷ to the ones imported from Europe. A hundred and fifty to two hundred firelocks were being completed every month in the workshops at Fyzabad and elsewhere. A large number of matchlocks³⁸ with bayonets were also produced in several other places besides Fyzabad. A huge magazine of military stores had been collected, and in every city the Vazir was making shots or rockets, pikes, swords etc. and herein he spared no labour or expense. The Vazir spent the morning

³⁵ 700 heavy guns were manufactured, according to Imadus Snadat (Lucknow Text), p. 103.

³⁶ "... two blackmen (Bengallees) have the direction of casting his guns" (*Vide* Col. R. Smith's Minute, August 3, 1768.)

³⁷ "To enable you to form the most perfect idea of the military improvements of the Nabob Sujah al Dowlah, I send you, by Captain Purvis, a musket which was one of his first attempts, and also a lock which is of his last and best manufacture." (*Vide* Letter from Verelst to Court, Sept. 26, 1768.)

³⁸ "The English flintlocks were nothing to their matchlocks for quickness in loading and rapidity of firing."

(*Vide* Tarikh Farahbaksh, Tr. Hoey, II, p. 7.)

time in inspecting regimental exercise and in overseeing his founders and gunsmiths with whom he spent two or three hours daily. Col. Smith wrote, "I cannot but admire the man for the great progress he has already made in his new system."

Col. Smith, in short, tried to make out that all the aforesaid military preparations of the Vazir were really directed against the Company, and urged, "I have had occasion to observe that the idea of dependence on us hurts him beyond measure it is highly expedient for us to resolve on some efficacious means to check his rising power." His conviction was fully shared by Col. Barker, Commander of the Third Brigade, who too reported³⁹ at this time that the indefatigable attention the Vazir gave to his military department and the progress he had already made in his army were "beyond conception."⁴⁰ Col. Barker also warned the Select Committee that the Vazir had "an inclination to try the strength and courage of his newly disciplined army."

The implicit confidence⁴¹ of the Governor and Select Committee in the Vazir was at last shaken in some measure when it came to their knowledge in July that the latter was secretly procuring arms from Chandernagore and Chinsura.⁴² The fact came to light quite accidentally. Some boats belonging to the Vazir while returning from Calcutta were detained⁴³ on suspicion by the Customs officials at the confluence of the Ganges and the Dehwa, and were found to be laden with arms. On search being made, more arms were found buried in the sand near the bank of the Dehwa. There remained in consequence no doubt about the fact that these had been

³⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., March 2, 1768.

⁴⁰ Letter from Col. Sir Robert Barker, February 17, 1768.

⁴¹ Letter to Court, March 28, 1768 " . . . his whole revenue can never support a force which can be really formidable to us"

⁴² Beng. Sel. Com., July 23, 1768.

⁴³ Letters from Mr. T. Rumbold, June 19, 20, and 30, 1768. Letter from Mr. G. Waller to Mr. T. Rumbold, June 18, 1768. Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold to Mr. G. Waller, June 19, 1768.

concealed there for despatch to Oudh.⁴⁴ These arms appeared to have been collected from the French and the Dutch, and were all "old and bad" in the opinion of Verelst.⁴⁵ But, what surprised the authorities most was the fact that the detained boats had left Calcutta under cover of a 'dastak' obtained by the Vazir's Valil expressly for empty boats.⁴⁶ It was apparent, therefore, that arms were being systematically smuggled out of Bengal in a clandestine manner.⁴⁷ In reply to the Vazir's seemingly innocent protest⁴⁸ against the unauthorized detention of his boats, the Governor strongly remonstrated⁴⁹ with the latter against his secret importation of arms from Bengal, and warned him, "Now that your Excellency's people carry away arms in this clandestine manner, it has a very ill appearance between friends."

No difference of opinion now remained as to the urgent need for some effective action to check the warlike preparations of the Vazir. The matter was discussed in detail by the Select Committee in their meeting of the 3rd of August.⁵⁰ Col. Smith who was present at this meeting maintained that the Vazir was keen on recovering Corah and Allahabad, and had in the early part of the year actually offered him four lakhs of rupees as a price for his support. He argued that the Committee had wrongly put trust in the Vazir "when the latter wrote that he was arming to assist us in the war of the Deccan," and in support of his suspicions against the Vazir pointed out, firstly, that the latter was in regular correspond-

⁴⁴ *Vide* Statement of Agha Riza Mughal. (Enclosed in Mr. T. Rumbold's letter, June 30, 1768.)

⁴⁵ *Vide* Verelst's Minute.

Beng. Sel. Com., July 23, 1768.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ The Directors prohibited the export of arms and cannon from Bengal to Oudh. (Letter from Court, November 11, 1768.)

⁴⁸ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 218.

⁴⁹ Letter from Verelst to the Vazir, July 27, 1768. Beng. Sel. Com., July 27, 1768.

⁵⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., August 3, 1768.

ence with the Marathas, the Nizam, and Haidar Ali; secondly, that he had persistently refused to dismiss M. Gentil; thirdly, that he had been secretly importing arms from Bengal in boats which had the Governor's 'dastak' to pass as empty; fourthly, that he had entertained⁵¹ French officers and troops in his service, and had raised an efficient and formidable army; fifthly, that he had spared no pains to manufacture musketry and cannon; and lastly, that he had amassed a vast amount⁵² of wealth to serve as the sinews of war. Col. Smith complained of the delay that had occurred in adopting suitable measures against the Vazir, and quoted extensively from the numerous letters⁵³ he had received since the last year from Capt. Harper on the subject of the Vazir's military preparations to show that his suspicions were not without foundation.

That the Vazir's military preparations⁵⁴ were such as was likely to give cause for suspicion is undeniable, but it must be

⁵¹ 600 French troops were enlisted, according to M. Gentil (*vide* his *Memoires*. p. 264.)

⁵² " . . . has now more than one crore of rupees in his treasury, and we have not one lack . . . " (Col. Smith's Minute, August 3, 1768.)

⁵³ Letters from Capt. G. Harper to Col. R. Smith, June 12, September 25, 30, October 25, 31, November 6, 9, 15, 20, December 2, 5, 10, 1767, January 16, 25, April 8, May 20, June 6, and July 10, 1768.

⁵⁴ The exact strength of the Vazir's army is difficult to ascertain. According to the estimate of the Deputation, it was as follows:—

Cavalry.	...	...	15825
Infantry	...	...	26285
Matchlockmen & peons	...	...	6660
Camels	...	...	164
Boatmen	...	...	525
Artillery	...	...	64 guns (4 to 12 pounders) and a number of small arms not exceeding 50.

(*Vide* Beng. Sel. Com., November 3, 1768.)

The number of troops in 1182 A. H., according to Imadus Saadat (Lucknow Text, p. 103) was as follows:—

Cavalry	...	...	11,000
Infantry	...	...	133,000
Footmen	...	...	18,000

pointed out that the contemporary evidence does not fully warrant the assumption that he actually contemplated a rupture with the English. M. Gentil who was with the Vazir during this time asserts⁵⁵ that if the English had declared war against the Vazir, the latter instead of fighting them would have gone down to Calcutta with his wives and children to seek the protection of the Council, and to demand justice from the King of England. M. Gentil further suggests that it was actually Col. Smith who sought⁵⁶ to force a war on the Vazir with a view to make a fortune for himself. This insinuation is, however, hardly fair, and may be said to have been inspired by M. Gentil's known prejudice⁵⁷ against Col. Smith. Even Verelst who had for a long time disbelieved the reports against the Vazir, and whose honesty⁵⁸ M. Gentil does not dispute, was ultimately compelled to change⁵⁹ his former sentiments with regard to the Vazir's conduct. It may be stated, however, that Verelst was never fully convinced of the fact that the Vazir meant to break with the English.⁶⁰

While subscribing wholeheartedly to the principle that the English policy should aim at restricting "any one power in Hindostan from rising too high above the general level,"⁶¹ Verelst, however, reminded his colleagues that the Vazir was not bound by any article of his existing treaty with the

According to *Tarikh Farahbaksh* (Tr. Hoey, II, p. 7.) the infantry itself consisted of 80,000 regulars, and 40,000 irregulars. There were in addition 22,000 messengers and spies.

⁵⁵ M. Gentil, *Memoires*, p. 271.

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 271-2.

⁵⁷ Col. Smith had offended him by "addressing complaints against" him, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

⁵⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 271.

⁵⁹ Letter to Court, September 13, 1768. *Vide also Verelst's View*, etc. " . . . the war upon the Coast had drained the treasury of Bengal, and the most alarming accounts were industriously spread of the instability of the Company's affairs. Allured by the tempting occasion, Sujah ul Dowlah began to listen to the voice of ambition."

⁶⁰ Letter to Court, September 25, 1768 " . . . no satisfactory evidence appears of the Nabob ever proposing a war with us . . . "

⁶¹ Verelst's *Minute*, August 3, 1768.

Company to limit his forces to a fixed number. He, therefore, suggested that the Vazir should be made to reduce his army under orders secured from the Emperor, which could be lawfully enforced by the Company in case the Vazir refused to comply with them. As Col. Smith strongly opposed⁶² the plan of the Governor on the ground that it might lead to a war with the Vazir, the consideration of the matter was postponed for the next meeting.

On the 10th of August,⁶³ Messrs Floyer, Becher, and Cartier expressed their considered views on the conduct of the Vazir, and were unanimous on the point that the latter's military preparations were highly alarming. Mr. Floyer was of the opinion⁶⁴ that the Vazir meditated hostile measures against the English, and he accordingly supported the plan of an embassy to the Emperor and the Vazir. Mr. Becher apprehended a junction between the Marathas and the Vazir, and proposed⁶⁵ that the latter should be plainly warned that the English would not "suffer him to keep a larger force than 10,000 foot and 5000 horse." Mr. Cartier stated⁶⁶ that the Vazir had made himself "the most formidable prince in India," and that conciliatory methods alone might not answer in this case. Eventually after much discussion the Select Committee agreed to the proposal of a deputation to the Emperor and the Vazir. Col. Barker was at the same time directed to reinforce the garrison at Chunar in case he had convincing proofs of the Vazir's hostile inten-

⁶² Col. Smith's Minutes of August 3 and 14, 1768

"... if the King should require of Sujah Daulah to disband any part of his forces, his haughty disposition would induce him to treat such orders with contempt."

⁶³ Beng. Sel. Com., August 10, 1768.

⁶⁴ *Vide* Mr. C. Floyer's Minute, August 10, 1768.

"... we should prevent a rupture with that prince unless we are reduced to it by the most absolute necessity."

⁶⁵ *Vide* Mr. R. Becher's Minute, August 10, 1768.

⁶⁶ *Vide* Mr. J. Cartier's Minute, August 10, 1768.

tions.⁶⁷ The authorities at Bombay⁶⁸ and Madras⁶⁹ were also requested to get hold of any letters that might pass between the Vazir and his supposed allies in the Deccan.

On the 17th of August,⁷⁰ the details regarding the deputation were finally agreed upon after a prolonged debate. As the Governor had not been keeping good health for some time past,⁷¹ the Select Committee appointed Mr. Cartier, Col. Smith and Mr. Russell as members of the proposed deputation. It was unanimously agreed that the deputies should take with them two letters addressed to the Vazir. The first letter should contain "a fair candid representation facts," and was to be delivered to the latter by the deputation who were "to use their utmost endeavours to accomplish the reduction of the Nabob's military strength by friendly arguments and mild exhortations." But in case such efforts proved ineffectual, the deputation were to present the second letter which should require in plainer terms the immediate reduction of the Vazir's forces. The Select Committee further resolved, "The deputies should also be entrusted that if they find the negotiation must end in a rupture, to apply to the King requesting of his Majesty to issue his orders to the Vizier for disbanding part of his forces and that the deputies should acquaint the Vizier of our determination to enforce obedience to the King's orders, as we deem such a reduction essentially necessary to the preservation of the general tranquillity of the Empire."

The drafts of the two letters addressed to the Vazir were approved by the Select Committee at their meeting of the 13th of September.⁷² The first letter stated that instead of disbanding his forces the Vazir had in fact been making fresh levies

⁶⁷ Letter to Col. Sir Robert Barker, August 10, 1768.

⁶⁸ Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, August 10, 1768.

⁶⁹ Letter to the President and Council of Fort St. George, August 10, 1768.

⁷⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., August 17, 1768.

⁷¹ Verelst's View, etc., Appendix, p. 79.

⁷² Beng. Sel. Com., September 13, 1768.

of troops "without any pretence being assigned for such measures." The Vazir was finally thus admonished, "Now it becomes necessary that we should not walk in the dark any longer. One single question naturally occurs, for what purpose is your Excellency making all these military preparations? Your dominions enjoy perfect tranquillity and we are yet your friends." The second letter which was to be presented in the event of the first proving ineffectual briefly informed the Vazir that the Emperor had been graciously pleased to direct him to reduce the number of his forces, and the Vazir was warned, "It is our determined resolution to enforce his royal commands." Meanwhile, the Governor wrote friendly letters to the Vazir intimating that on account of ill-health he himself was unable to leave Calcutta, but that a deputation would shortly proceed to Allahabad "to silence the rumours of the evil-minded people,"⁷³ and to demonstrate the stability of our treaty and friendship."⁷⁴

The detailed instructions⁷⁵ given to the deputation amply indicate the intentions of the authorities. As they were conscious of the fact that under the existing treaty the Vazir was not obliged to limit his forces, they were desirous of concluding a fresh treaty whereby his military power might be restricted within a safe limit. They thought that an army of ten or twelve thousand horse, and eight or ten thousand disciplined sepoys⁷⁶ was sufficient for the requirements of the Vazir, and would not also endanger the safety of Bengal.⁷⁷ They, however, saw no objection to allowing a few thousand peons extra for the work of revenue collection alone. They would not allow the English garrison to be withdrawn from Chunar in any case, nor would they agree to the recall of the Third Brigade which they considered to be "a check on all

⁷³ Abs. I. 1766-71, No. 107.

⁷⁴ Abs. I. 1766-71, No. 131.

⁷⁵ Letter of Instructions to the Deputation, September 13, 1768.

⁷⁶ Letter to the Deputation, October 25, 1768.

⁷⁷ Letter to Court, November 21, 1768.

our neighbours, and more particularly on the Vazir."⁷⁸ They were fully sensible of the fact that to a man of the Vazir's "ambitious and vainglorious disposition" there could not be a greater humiliation than the public knowledge of the enforced reduction of his forces. They accordingly suggested to the deputation that the Vazir's disgrace might be prevented, if he could be prevailed upon to make a tender of the supernumerary sepoy as recruits to the Company's brigades.⁷⁹

The deputation left Calcutta early in October,⁸⁰ and reached Benares on the 17th of November.⁸¹ Unwilling to meet them at Allahabad in the presence of the Emperor, the Vazir set out with a small escort,⁸² and after repeated marches arrived at Benares on the 18th of November,⁸³ and pitched his tents on the banks of the Barna.⁸⁴ At his first conference with the deputation, the Vazir heard them with the utmost attention, and freely acknowledged the reasonableness of many of their observations. He, however, bitterly inveighed against the baseness of designing men who had misrepresented his intentions to his allies, and claimed that he had never acted contrary to the pleasure and satisfaction of the English 'Sardars'.⁸⁵

During the next and subsequent interviews, the Vazir assumed a totally different attitude, and showed no inclination to acquiesce in the proposed reduction of his army. He

"From this force we can have nothing to apprehend; and we think it will be sufficient to enable him to preserve that respect from the neighbouring powers, which he has hitherto maintained."

⁷⁸ Letter to Court, September 13, 1768.

⁷⁹ Letter to the Deputation, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ Letter to Court, November 21, 1768.

⁸¹ Beng. Sel. Com., January 4, 1769.

⁸² Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 317.

"Sans escorte" (without escort), according to M. Gentil (*vide* his *Memoires*, p. 272.)

⁸³ Letter from the Deputation, November 30, 1768.

⁸⁴ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 316.

⁸⁵ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 315.

advanced a number of arguments⁸⁶ against the proposal of the deputation. In the first place, there was no clause in the existing treaty restricting his army to any particular number. In the second place, as he had in no way violated the former treaty, it was unjust to propose a fresh treaty which required him to reduce his army. In the third place, he enlarged on the strength of his forces in former times. In the fourth place, he required a large and efficient army not only for the defence of his own dominions, but also for rendering assistance to the English when they needed it. In the fifth place, he urged that the demand might have been made with greater force on the Rohillas. Lastly, he explained that he had recently enlisted fresh troops only to make up the deficiency caused by death, desertion, and rejection. He hoped, therefore, that the false insinuations of the calumniators would not be believed, and that no new treaty would be forced on him at their instigation alone.

Finding all their remonstrances fruitless, the deputation presented the first letter of the Select Committee to the Vazir. This had apparently some effect, as the latter "at length moderated in some degree."⁸⁷ The deputies thereupon assured him that they had proposed no new treaty, but merely an agreement explanatory of the first article of the existing treaty, wherein it was expressly stipulated that neither party should give any cause for suspicion or jealousy. After much discussion, the Vazir declared "with great firmness"⁸⁸ that he required, for the protection of his dominions and the collection of his revenues, a force of not less than 35,000 men, of which only seven or eight thousand should be horse.

Anxious for an amicable settlement of the issue the deputation acquiesced in the Vazir's demand for 35,000 men. They,

⁸⁶ Letter from the Deputation, *op. cit.*

Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 236.

Beng. Sel. Com., January 4, 1768.

⁸⁷ Letter from the Deputation, *op. cit.*

⁸⁸ Letter from the Deputation, *op. cit.*

however, sought to prescribe the strength of the various bodies of which that force was to be composed of. For example, the infantry was fixed at 7000. As the Vazir would not accede to this, the deputation consented to ten battalions of 1000 each being retained. After this point had been conceded, the Vazir further demanded that the number of the irregulars as well as the mode of discipline should be left to his own option. In short, as the deputation wrote to the Select Committee, "The nearer we came up to his terms the higher he grew in his demands."⁸⁹ The Vazir would hear of no other terms, and talked of going down to Calcutta, unless these were accepted.

The obdurate attitude of the Vazir obliged the deputation to break off the negotiations. They accordingly took leave of the latter, and intimated their intention to proceed to Allahabad on the next morning. This communication produced a remarkable effect. The Vazir at once relented, and sent a message to the deputation stating that he was afraid they had altogether misunderstood him. The deputation replied through Capt. Harper that unless he was willing to accept the terms proposed by them, any further conference was unnecessary, and that they were determined to proceed to the royal presence. The Vazir thereupon communicated his willingness to comply with their wishes.⁹⁰

Next day the Vazir readily consented to nearly all that the deputation had proposed. Only one or two alterations were made in the draft of the agreement at his earnest request.⁹¹ The treaty was finally agreed upon and signed⁹² on the 29th of November. It⁹³ required the following words to be inserted as an explanatory clause in the former treaty : "It is by the

⁸⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., January 4, 1769.

⁹⁰ Trans. R. 1769, No. 31.

⁹¹ Letter from the Deputation, *op. cit.*

⁹² Beng. Sel. Com., December 13, 1768.

Letter to Court, January 3, 1769.

⁹³ Beng. Sel. Com., January 4, 1769.

advice and consent of the President and Council aforesaid agreed that His Highness shall not entertain a number of forces exceeding 35,000 men, whether sepoy, cavalry, peons, artillery men, rocketmen or troops of any denomination whatever. Of these 10,000 are to be cavalry, 10 battalions of sepoy including subadars, jamadars, havaldars and all ranks of officers not to exceed 10,000 men. The Nudjib Regiments consisting of 5,000 men with matchlocks to remain always in its present establishment. Five hundred men for the artillery and that number never to be exceeded. The remaining 9,500 men are to be irregulars, neither to be clothed, armed, or disciplined after the manner of the English sepoy or Nudjib Regiments. And, His Highness also engages to arm none of his forces besides the 10,000 men mentioned in this treaty after the English manner, nor to train them in the discipline of the English troops. In consideration thereof the said John Cartier, Colonel Richard Smith, and Claud Russell engage in behalf of His Excellency the Nabob Syfet Dowlah, and the English Company aforesaid, that whilst His Highness Sujah ul Dowlah aforesaid and his successors shall abide by the articles of the Treaty neither the present Council of Fort William, nor any future Council shall hereafter introduce any new matter relative hereto besides what has been firmly agreed to and is now concluded upon."

The Vazir also wrote a separate agreement,⁹⁴ promising to reduce his forces to the number specified in the aforesaid treaty within three months.⁹⁵ The agreement was executed by the Vazir in his own hand, and was worded thus, "I promise to disband all the troops I now entertain exceeding the number of 35,000 horse and foot, and to comply with all the articles stipulated in the treaty within the space of three

Letter to Court, January 6, 1769.

⁹⁴ The agreement is dated the 19th of Rajab, 1182 A. H. (corresponding to November 26, 1768).

⁹⁵ "We have allowed him three months from the date of the Treaty." Letter from the Deputation, November 30, 1768.

months."⁹⁶ According to the estimate⁹⁷ of the deputation, the Vazir was to disband not less than 15,000 men. After the execution of the treaty and the agreement, the Vazir accompanied⁹⁸ the deputation to Allahabad, where the treaty was formally ratified by the Emperor.⁹⁹ The Select Committee also approved of the treaty, and passed a resolution of thanks to Messrs Cartier, Smith and Russell for their services in connection with the deputation to the Vazir.¹⁰⁰

The new treaty with the Vazir was a diplomatic achievement of no mean importance. The Vazir's military dependence on the English was confirmed as a result of this treaty, and his ambition to build up a formidable force of his own was finally curbed¹⁰¹ without war and bloodshed. The number of troops that he was now allowed to retain was no more than a bare minimum, and the English could have no apprehensions of danger¹⁰² from Oudh hereafter.

⁹⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., January 25, 1769.

⁹⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., January 4, 1769.

⁹⁸ Letter from the Deputation, December 31, 1768, and letter to Court, January 6, 1769.

⁹⁹ Letter to Court, February 3, 1769.

¹⁰⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., January 25, 1769.

¹⁰¹ ". we do not find he has raised or added a man to his army since the treaty at Benares."

Letter to Court, April 6, 1769.

¹⁰² "By the stipulated reduction of the Nabob's troops, he is still permitted to retain a number which will render him respectable among the powers of Hindostan, though in no degree sufficiently formidable to trouble the repose of these provinces."

Letter to Court, January 6, 1769.

CHAPTER VI

SHAH ALAM'S RELATIONS WITH THE ENGLISH (1767—69)

The relations between the English and Shah Alam entered on a new and interesting phase after the departure of Clive. The interminable intrigue and faction-fight at the royal court, together with the Emperor's growing discontent with his existing lot, presented during the period of Verelst's administration problems which would admit of no solution without a radical change in the policy laid down by Clive. Verelst's well-meaning efforts to maintain the *status quo* serve only to illustrate the many-sided difficulties inherent therein.

Almost immediately after his assumption of office, Verelst was called upon¹ by the Emperor to make satisfactory arrangements for a regular payment of the Bengal tribute. The Emperor complained that owing to frequent delay in the payment of the tribute he had to borrow² large sums of money from local bankers to meet his ordinary expenses. In fact, the first few letters that Verelst received from the Emperor, or his minister, Muniruddaulah, contained nothing but pressing requests for a more punctual payment of the tribute, and bitter complaints about the arrears recurring every month. The Emperor protested that the payments were not being made in the manner solemnly agreed to by Clive, and repeatedly urged the immediate payment of the sums³ due to the 'sahukars'.⁴

From the letters of the Emperor it appears that he wanted, firstly, that the tribute should be paid by monthly instalments,⁵

¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, Nos. 4, 44, etc.

² Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 74, etc.

³ Six lakhs of rupees (*vide* Orig. R. 1764-67, No. 67).

⁴ Lala Kashmirimal and Lala Baij Nath (*vide* Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 85).

⁵ Trans. 1767-68, No. 45.

secondly, that the payments should be made from the factory at Patna, as the vicinity of that place would prevent delay,⁶ thirdly, that the monthly instalments should be remitted punctually,⁷ fourthly, that the drafts for the tribute should be sent through Muniruddaulah alone whom he referred to as the sole administrator of the royal affairs,⁸ fifthly, that a 'gumashtah' of the Seths might be stationed⁹ at Allahabad, so that all delays and inconveniences in procuring money for his disbursements in times of need might be prevented, and lastly, that the payments should be made in the Murshidabad currency alone.¹⁰

Verelst ascribed the delay in the payment of the tribute to Clive's ill-health and subsequent departure,¹¹ and assured¹² the Emperor that urgent letters had now been written by him to the authorities at Murshidabad to send the tribute punctually and by monthly instalments.¹³ He also promised to pay up the dues of the 'Sahukars' who had advanced loans to the Emperor. It is, however, interesting to note that the Governor sought to discourage the reckless extravagance of the Emperor, and plainly requested him not to incur further debts until the "Sahukars'" account was fully settled.¹⁴ This remonstrance had apparently some effect, as Muniruddaulah shortly afterwards assured the Governor that no further sums would be borrowed on His Majesty's account till the discharge of all balances due to the 'Sahukars.'¹⁵

⁶ Trans. 1767-68, No. 63.

⁷ Trans. 1767-68, No. 86.

⁸ Original R. 1764-69, No. 67.

⁹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 246.

¹⁰ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 275.

¹¹ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 66.

¹² Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 71.

¹³ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 74.

¹⁴ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 104.

¹⁵ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 238.

To ensure the regular payment of the Bengal tribute, the Governor entered¹⁶ into an agreement with Jagat Seth whereby the latter engaged¹⁷ to establish a banking house at Allahabad for the payment of the royal tribute by regular monthly instalments in 'Vaziri' rupees at an exchange of 3 per cent on the current rupee of Calcutta.¹⁸ According to the Governor's own admission, the Company was "a gainer of 9 or 10 per cent by the above mode of payment."¹⁹ It may be noted, however, that as the Emperor refused²⁰ to allow any deductions to be made on account of exchange, the Governor subsequently directed²¹ the authorities at Murshidabad to pay the tribute without any abatement whatsoever. From the Governor's letter to Muhammad Riza Khan on this subject, it appears that the exchange had been usually calculated from 7 to 8 per cent.²² With regard to the Emperor's repeated complaints regarding²³ the 'Vaziri' rupees, the Governor maintained that the treaty required the tribute to be paid in the currency of the place where His Majesty should happen to reside.²⁴ The Emperor was, however, pleased to learn that the tribute was in future to be paid through the Seths with punctuality and expedition, and it is amusing to find that as a token of his gratitude he conferred upon the Governor a 'mansab' of

¹⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., July 6, 1767.

¹⁷ Trans. I. 1767-68, No. 178.

The 'Vaziri' coins were "10 per cent worse" than Arcot rupees. (Bolts: Considerations, etc., p. 205.) Each 'Vaziri' rupee, it may be noted, contained 165.2 grains of pure silver.

¹⁸ Letter from the Governor to Select Committee, June 28, 1767.

¹⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., *op. cit.*

According to a contemporary writer, the current coins after re-coinage into 'Vaziri' ones "produced to the operators a benefit of at least 20 per cent." *Vide*, Grand's Narrative (edited by Firminger), p. 23.

²⁰ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 321.

²¹ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 207.

²² Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 211.

²³ Trans. R. 1767-68, Nos. 418, 423, etc.

²⁴ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 207.

eight thousand with the titles of Lord of the Empire, and General of Warriors.²⁵

An interesting dispute arose between the Emperor and the authorities at Murshidabad during the summer months of 1767 over the question of the customary present of elephants. In compliance with the request²⁶ of the Emperor for some elephants the Governor had asked Muhammad Riza Khan early in March to send a few elephants to Allahabad. It appears, however, that the latter sent twenty-six elephants, and debited their price amounting to Rs. 68,000 to the Emperor's account. The Emperor was furious when he was informed of the deduction of the aforesaid amount from the tribute. He complained to the Governor that elephants had always been sent in the past "exclusive of the revenues of the Royal Sarkar,"²⁷ and stated that he would never consent to any deduction on their account. He bitterly complained that of the twenty-six elephants sent to him six had died within ten days after their arrival, and the rest were either blind, lame, or diseased, so that none of them was "worthy of carrying His Propitious Majesty." He declared that he would rather return such worthless animals than allow a single rupee to be deducted on account of these. The matter was satisfactorily settled when the Governor instructed the officials at Murshidabad not to deduct the price of the presents of elephants and cloths from the royal tribute.²⁸

That the Emperor was not content with his small demesne and that he had ambitions of foreign conquest came to the knowledge of the Governor in September, when the Emperor first intimated²⁹ to him his claims to those districts in the

²⁵ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 353.

Verelst had been granted the rank of 7000 horse after his appointment as Governor. (*Vide* Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 123.)

²⁶ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 71.

²⁷ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 321.

²⁸ Letter to Muhammad Riza Khan, November 22, 1767.

²⁹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 356.

subah of Allahabad, which had formerly been seized by the Raja of Bundelkhand. The Emperor represented that these districts had always formed part of the *subah* of Allahabad, and as such should be restored to him by Hindu Pat, the Raja of Bundelkhand. He further requested the Governor that the Raja's Vakil who was at this time on his way to Calcutta should not be countenanced, lest the Raja should feel secure and refuse to surrender the places unlawfully seized by him. Towards the close of 1767, the Emperor again wrote³⁰ to the Governor saying that he would never give up his legitimate claim to the usurped districts, and complained that Hindu Pat had so far ignored his threats and remonstrances, and had evidently no intention to cede them peacefully.

The Emperor was so eager to recover those districts from Hindu Pat that he even offered the English one-half of the revenues thereof as a price for their services.³¹ The Governor for the present declined to grant the required assistance on the grounds, firstly, that while the war with Haidar Ali was still unfinished, the English could not "provoke new contests and commence a rupture with Hindu Pat,"³² secondly, that the aforesaid districts had been seized long before the Emperor came under English protection,³³ and thirdly, that an attack on Hindu Pat might provoke a war with the Marathas.³⁴ The Governor, however, wrote a friendly letter to Hindu Pat advising him to pay homage to the Emperor and thus render his rights more secure by the royal sanction.³⁵ The Emperor nevertheless continued to hope that after the war in the Deccan was over, the English would "devote proper and effectual attention to the re-annexation of the dismembered districts."³⁶

³⁰ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 418.

³¹ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 207.

³² *Op. cit.*

³³ *Op. cit.*

³⁴ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 179.

³⁵ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 210 A.

³⁶ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 43.

The question was re-opened³⁷ towards the close of 1768 on the occasion of the deputation of Messrs Cartier, Smith and Russell to the Vazir and the Emperor. Anxious to provide for the permanent maintenance of the English troops at Allahabad without drain of treasure from Bengal, the Select Committee proposed³⁸ that the districts belonging to the *subah* of Allahabad in the possession of Hindu Pat should be recovered, and their revenues assigned for this purpose.³⁹ When the deputation informed the Vazir of this proposal, the latter readily offered his services in the expedition against Hindu Pat, and declared that if he were allowed to make a complete conquest of Bundelkhand, he would engage to pay the Company an annual tribute of twenty lakhs of rupees.⁴⁰ At Allahabad the deputation represented to the Emperor that as the maintenance of the English troops at Allahabad caused a heavy drain of specie from Bengal, it was "their earnest desire to recall their troops."⁴¹ The Emperor who was averse⁴² to the recall of the Third Brigade gladly assented⁴³ to the proposal to appropriate the revenues of the districts usurped by Hindu Pat towards its maintenance.

During their stay at Allahabad the deputation made full enquiries into the history of the districts usurped by Hindu Pat, and came to learn that these had been seized by Raja Setu Pat, the great-grandfather of Hindu Pat, as early as 1729.⁴⁴

³⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., August 31, 1768.

³⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., September 13, 1768.

³⁹ Letter of Instructions to the Deputation, September 13, 1768.

⁴⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., January 25, 1769.

⁴¹ 'Arzi' from the Deputation to the Emperor, December 20, 1768. It appears from the proceedings of the Select Committee (Beng. Sel. Com., *op. cit.*) that during the last three years nearly 80 lakhs of rupees had been spent on account of the Third Brigade stationed at Allahabad.

⁴² Letter from the Deputation, December 31, 1768.

⁴³ Reply from the Emperor to the 'Arzi' of the Deputation. *Vide* Beng. Sel. Com., *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., February 1, 1769.

Letter from the Deputation, January 2, 1769.

Col. Smith⁴⁵ reported to the Select Committee that these lands were a part of the *subah* of Allahabad, and that the Vazir was extremely eager to obtain 'sanads' for this country.⁴⁶ The Governor and Select Committee, however, hesitated to take the risk⁴⁷ of a war. Besides, they had grave doubts about the legality of the Emperor's pretensions to those districts.⁴⁸ They finally decided to shelve the whole question and resolved in their meeting of the 1st of March, 1769, to inform the Emperor that the English could not engage in the proposed expedition against Hindu Pat. They directed Col. Smith to make it clear to the Emperor that in case he still granted 'sanads' for those districts to the Vazir, the English troops would be immediately withdrawn from Allahabad, and if the Vazir undertook an expedition against Hindu Pat, the English would "consider him as an invader of those territories which His Majesty claims a right to."⁴⁹

This decision of the Select Committee was subsequently approved by the Directors who declared that it was not the business of the English to enquire into the rights of Raja Hindu Pat. The Directors pointed out, "The Hindooput Rajah . . . will naturally endeavour to form alliances, to defend himself against this unexpected attack of the English, then you will say your honour is engaged, and the army is to be led against other powers still more distant."⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Col. Smith had been expressly desired by the Select Committee to send full particulars regarding the lands in dispute. *Vide* Letter to Col. Smith, January 25, 1769.

⁴⁶ Letter from Col. R. Smith, February 17, 1769.

⁴⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., March 1, 1769. ". . . the sword once unsheathed may lead us into new adventures."

⁴⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., *op. cit.*

Letter to Court, April 6, 1769. ". . . the royal claim could not clearly be established."

⁴⁹ Letter to Col. R. Smith, March 1, 1769.

Letter to Court, April 6, 1769.

⁵⁰ Letter from Court, May 11, 1769.

Shujauddaulah's efforts to secure an effective control of the royal affairs, and the Emperor's undisguised hatred for his Vazir constituted a difficult problem which engaged the attention of the Governor almost throughout his regime. The reasons for the Emperor's aversion to the Vazir are easy to understand. In the first place,⁵¹ he could never forget the humiliation and misery he had endured during his former alliance with the latter. In the second place,⁵² he had hoped to obtain the Vazir's territories for his own son, the Shahzadah, after the battle of Buxar, but his hopes were shattered in consequence of the unexpected restoration of Oudh to the Vazir. In the third place,⁵³ he had intended to confer the office of the *Vizarat* on the Shahzadah, but even this plan was frustrated by Clive who got the office conferred on Shuja-uddaulah. In the fourth place,⁵⁴ he suspected that the Vazir was again trying to bring him under his control. In the fifth place,⁵⁵ Muniruddaulah, the Vazir's 'Naib' at court, and other selfish intriguers who were opposed to, or jealous of the Vazir for some reason or other, constantly worked on his feelings, and aggravated his hatred for the Vazir. In the sixth place,⁵⁶ he feared that the Vazir was waiting for an opportunity to deprive him of his royal demesne of Allahabad and Kora. In the last place,⁵⁷ he had a strong conviction that the Vazir was a traitor, and as such could not be relied upon.

In April, 1767, Verelst was for the first time requested⁵⁸ by the Vazir to write a letter to the Emperor recommending that the royal affairs might be placed in the former's hands.

⁵¹ The Emperor had been insulted by the Vazir before the battle of Buxar, and was abandoned after it. *Vide* Sir Jadunath Sarkar's *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, p. 546.

⁵² Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 225.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 163.

⁵⁵ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 113 A.

⁵⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., Aug. 3, 1768.

⁵⁷ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 128.

⁵⁸ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 128.

The Vazir complained that the throne had "become as light as air" and the '*Vizarat*' had been "disgraced" through the machinations of the selfish counsellors of the Emperor.⁵⁹ He suggested, therefore, that the Bengal tribute might be paid to the latter through his hands so that the people near the Emperor's persons might be prevented from attempting further intrigues.⁶⁰ He also made it clear that unless he was invested with full authority over the Court, he could not be held responsible for the movements of His Majesty.

The Governor was himself aware⁶¹ of the fact that the affairs of the Court were in the hands of undesirable people, and so he readily espoused the cause of the Vazir, and determined to bring about a reconciliation between the latter and the Emperor. At first he thought⁶² of going personally to Allahabad to adjust the royal affairs, but later he changed his mind, and requested both the Vazir and Muniruddaulah to meet him somewhere in Bengal.⁶³ The Vazir, however, continued to represent⁶⁴ that unless the Governor himself came to Allahabad, his affairs could not be duly regulated. Meanwhile, getting scent of the Vazir's intentions to supplant Muniruddaulah, the Emperor cautioned the Governor early in June that the latter was a true and faithful servant, and that his enemies "were night and day labouring to sow dissension between him and the Governor."⁶⁵

The approach of the rainy season and subsequent indisposition⁶⁶ prevented the Governor from proceeding to Allahabad, while the Vazir too was unable to set out for Bengal on account of the relapse of his old malady.⁶⁷ The Governor

⁵⁹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 234.

⁶⁰ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 392.

⁶¹ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 164.

⁶² Trans. I. 1766-67, Nos. 147-49.

⁶³ Trans. I. 1766-67, Nos. 164-5.

⁶⁴ Trans. R. 1767-68, Nos. 250, 259-60.

⁶⁵ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 266.

⁶⁶ Cop. I. 1766-67, Nos. 180-82.

⁶⁷ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 274.

accordingly asked him to postpone his visit for the present, and sent him a doctor with some medicines.⁶⁸ Intent on stealing a march over his rival at this juncture, Muniruddaulah left Allahabad for Calcutta early in September⁶⁹ without giving the Vazir any information⁷⁰ about it. The Emperor at the same time reminded the Governor that Muniruddaulah was "the sole ruler and manager of His Majesty's Auspicious Sarkar," and that there was no other person in whom he could repose his confidence.⁷¹

The Emperor had a number of objects in deputing his favourite minister to Calcutta. Firstly, he desired that the Governor should not countenance⁷² the Vazir's scheme to supplant Muniruddaulah. Secondly, he wanted military assistance for the execution of his cherished plan⁷³ of an expedition to Delhi. Thirdly, he sought to press⁷⁴ his claims to the districts seized by Raja Hindu Pat. Fourthly, he was eager for a satisfactory settlement of the question of the Bengal remittances.⁷⁵ Lastly, he desired the continuance of the English troops at Allahabad.⁷⁶

Muniruddaulah's mission naturally excited the suspicions of the Vazir who in his letters to the Governor plainly expressed his anxiety and uneasiness on this occasion, and asked for full particulars regarding the mission.⁷⁷ The mission, however, produced no results. The Governor did not approve⁷⁸ of the proposed expedition to Delhi, and considered an attack on

⁶⁸ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 179.

⁶⁹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 376.

⁷⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., February 10, 1768.

⁷¹ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 334.

⁷² Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 334.

⁷³ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 202.

⁷⁴ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 356.

⁷⁵ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 312.

⁷⁶ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 205.

⁷⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., February 10, 1768.

⁷⁸ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 207.

Hindu Pat both unnecessary and impolitic. The question of the Bengal remittances too was not adjusted to the full satisfaction of the Emperor, as is apparent from the latter's subsequent complaints.⁷⁹ The Governor, however, agreed to continue the English troops at Allahabad in compliance with the Emperor's earnest wishes,⁸⁰ and sent to him a few presents⁸¹ including a 'nazr' of 101 gold mohurs, three good elephants, and a curious watch, which, it is interesting to note, were highly appreciated.⁸² Muniruddaulah was instructed to make friends⁸³ with the Vazir, and was forbidden to oppose the latter in the exercise of his functions.⁸⁴

Muniruddaulah's conduct, after his return to Allahabad, was anything but friendly to the Vazir. In his letters to the Governor, he began making serious allegations against the Vazir, and warned the Governor against M. Gentil.⁸⁵ Early in February, 1768, the Vazir complained to the Governor that Muniruddaulah had publicly announced that he had brought with him a letter of appointment from Calcutta to the administration of the royal house, and protested that although he was the manager of the Emperor's affairs by right of his station, the right did not belong to him in reality.⁸⁶ Verelst at once wrote to Muniruddaulah severely reprimanding him for his conduct, and asked him to give up his presumptuous idea "of being sole manager in the royal house."⁸⁷ Col. Barker was at the same time directed to effect a reconciliation between Muniruddaulah and the Vazir.⁸⁸ The Governor informed Col. Barker, "We shall not fail to support him (the Vazir) in that title whether the King allows him to act or not"⁸⁹

⁷⁹ Trans. R. 1768, Nos. 101, 243; 1769, Nos. 19, 26, etc.

⁸⁰ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 220.

⁸¹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 35.

⁸² Trans. R. 1768, No. 36.

⁸³ Abs. I. 1768, No. 11.

⁸⁴ Abs. I. 1768, No. 18.

⁸⁵ Trans. R. 1768, No. 2, etc.

⁸⁶ Trans. R. 1768, No. 52.

⁸⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., March 2, 1768.

⁸⁸ Letter to Sir Robert Barker, March 2, 1768.

⁸⁹ Letter to Sir Robert Barker, February 28, 1768.

Muniruddaulah's pretensions had obviously been encouraged by the Emperor who now openly commanded the Vazir to deliver over the patent of his office, the artillery and the magazine to the charge of his deputy, Muniruddaulah.⁹⁰ The Vazir retorted that he did not require a deputy at court, and that he would never consent to the 'niabat' being given to Muniruddaulah in any case.⁹¹ He, however, sent⁹² a trusted officer to the court, professed his loyalty and attachment to the Emperor, and even offered to restore the dignity of the royal house by re-annexing the Emperor's ancestral dominions. The Emperor curtly replied that he had no need for his services and that he would not even taste water without the knowledge of the English.⁹³ In despair the Vazir bitterly inveighed against the machinations of "the men of low cunning and dangerous views" who surrounded the Emperor and perpetually intrigued and spread tales against him.⁹⁴

Early in March, Col. Barker reported⁹⁵ that the Vazir was displeased with Muniruddaulah, because, in the first place, the latter transacted all kinds of business without his advice, concurrence, or knowledge, in the second place, it was on account of the latter that he was prevented from executing the business of his office, in the third place, the latter having voluntarily offered him "the rentership of the Allahabad and Corah countries" had deprived him of its benefit, in the fourth place, the latter had also promised to procure his 'Sanads' for Bundelkhand, yet in this too he had deceived him, and in the last place, the latter went to Calcutta to transact royal business without his permission or advice. Meanwhile a letter was received from the Emperor, wherein the latter affirmed that the Vazir was claiming the sole direction of the royal

⁹⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., *op. cit.*

⁹¹ Letter from Sir Robert Barker, February 17, 1768.

⁹² Letter from Sir Robert Barker, February 25, 1768.

⁹³ Beng. Sel. Com., March 18, 1768.

⁹⁴ Trans. R. 1768, No. 76.

⁹⁵ Letter from Sir Robert Barker, March 5, 1768.

affairs "to put his perfidies into execution."⁹⁶ The Vazir on the other hand alleged that the Emperor's animosity against him was due solely to Muniruddaulah's insinuations.⁹⁷

The Governor and Select Committee had no doubt about the fact that Muniruddaulah had "filled the royal ear with ideas unfavourable to the Vizier."⁹⁸ They accordingly decided to remind the Emperor of the solemn engagements the Company had reciprocally entered into for the security of His Majesty's person, the defence of the Vazir's dominions, and the peace and tranquillity of Bengal, if he persisted in his refusal to admit the Vazir to the honours the latter was entitled to.⁹⁹ In their letter to Col. Barker, they expressed¹⁰⁰ their concern at the continued opposition of the Emperor to the Vazir, and advised him to proceed to Fyzabad and escort the Vazir to Allahabad for the purpose of removing¹⁰¹ the existing disagreement between the two. They further pointed out, "If Muniruddaulah persists in his unjust measures, we shall deem him unworthy of the connection at present subsisting between us."¹⁰²

As the Emperor would not allow¹⁰³ Muniruddaulah to visit¹⁰⁴ the Vazir, Col. Barker went alone to Fyzabad in April and had several conferences with the Vazir.¹⁰⁵ The latter strongly animadverted on the selfish intrigues of Muniruddaulah, and refused to go to Allahabad, unless he was invested with the full authority of the 'Vizarat.' He demanded,¹⁰⁶ firstly,

⁹⁶ Trans. R. 1768, No. 70.

⁹⁷ Trans. R. 1768, No. 113 A

⁹⁸ Letter to Court, March 24, 1768.

⁹⁹ *Op. cit.*

¹⁰⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., April 15, 1768.

¹⁰¹ Letter to Court, March 28, 1768.

¹⁰² Letter to Sir Robert Barker, April 15, 1768.

¹⁰³ Trans. R. 1768, Nos. 124, 128, 130, etc.

¹⁰⁴ The Vazir complained, "Muniruddaulah has not come in company with Colonel Barker and lays the blame at the King's door."

Trans. R. 1768, No. 161.

¹⁰⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., July 20, 1768.

¹⁰⁶ Letter from Sir Robert Barker, April 18, 1768.

that no one should interfere in the affairs of the 'Vizarat,' secondly, that he should be allowed to transact the business of the 'Vizarat' himself, and thirdly, that he should not be prevented from entering upon his just rights.

On his return to Allahabad, Col. Barker waited¹⁰⁷ on the Emperor, and tried in vain to induce the latter to call the Vazir. The Emperor protested that Muniruddaulah had grown old in the service of his father, and had loyally served him too, and urged that the latter had committed no fault which might justify his dismissal.¹⁰⁸ The Emperor further pointed¹⁰⁹ out that the office of the 'Vizarat' had been conferred by him on Shujaud-daulah upon the express condition that the latter should make Muniruddaulah his 'Naib' in the 'Vizarat' and other offices. On the representation of Col. Barker, however, he eventually promised to send for the 'Vazir' if the Governor personally came to Allahabad, or allowed Muniruddaulah¹¹⁰ to go to Calcutta to explain the points at dispute. In his letters to the Governor, the Emperor vehemently complained of the "wiles and stratagems" of the Vazir, and asserted that he was "too well acquainted with the traitors produced in that family ever to be deceived again."¹¹¹ In reply to the Governor's remark¹¹² that Muniruddaulah was incapable of performing his duties owing to his age and infirmities, the Emperor urged that the abilities of the latter were superior to those of people who had all the advantages of youth, and affirmed that Muniruddaulah was dearer to him than a brother or an only son.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Letter from Sir Robert Barker, May 3, 1768.

¹⁰⁸ *Op. cit.*

¹⁰⁹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 163.

¹¹⁰ The Emperor had intended to come down to Calcutta himself, but later he changed his mind on the representation of the Governor that his moving towards Bengal would cast a reflection on the honour and good name of the English.

Trans. R. 1768, No. 205.

¹¹¹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 225.

¹¹² Abs. I. 1768, No. 92.

¹¹³ Trans. R. 1768, No. 261.

In July the Vazir made one more attempt to win the goodwill of the Emperor. A trusted officer was deputed by him to wait on the Emperor and communicate his proposals,¹¹⁴ firstly, that he would appoint Muniruddaulah as his 'Naib,' secondly, that the Bengal tribute should pass to the Emperor through his hands, and lastly, that he should be allowed to reduce the Rajas of Bundelkhand to obedience and thus augment the imperial revenues. The Vazir's officer was introduced to the Emperor by Col. Barker, and was duly honoured with a 'Khilat' and the usual marks of distinction.¹¹⁵ The Emperor, however, maintained a cold demeanour at the time of audience, and in reply to the Vazir's proposals he declared, firstly, that the Vazir must sign an agreement regarding the appointment of Muniruddaulah to the 'Naibship,' secondly, that he was perfectly satisfied with the present arrangements regarding the payment of the Bengal tribute and desired no change, and lastly, that he would not sanction an expedition to Bundelkhand without previously consulting the English. In short, the Emperor betrayed an open distrust of the motives underlying the friendly overtures of the Vazir.

The agreement¹¹⁶ which the Emperor desired the Vazir to sign required the latter's free and unconditional acceptance of Muniruddaulah as his 'Naib.' The Vazir naturally objected to the draft agreement sent by the Emperor, and drew up one¹¹⁷ himself, wherein Muniruddaulah's appointment was made conditional on the latter's agreeing to act in nothing without his knowledge or advice. The Emperor was also asked to promise in writing¹¹⁸ that if Muniruddaulah acted in any matter without the Vazir's knowledge, he would at once be dismissed, and the Vazir would in that case be allowed to perform the functions of the 'Vizarat' with his own hands.

¹¹⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., August 10, 1768.

¹¹⁵ Trans. R. 1768, No. 246.

¹¹⁶ Letter from Sir Robert Barker, July 28, 1768.

¹¹⁷ Trans. R. 1768, No. 246 B.

¹¹⁸ Trans. R. 1768, No. 246 C.

The Emperor unceremoniously rejected¹¹⁰ the drafts sent by the Vazir, and informed the Governor that he had no confidence in Musalmans or any of the chiefs of Hindustan, and that he would admit none but the English 'Sardars' to the administration of his household.¹²⁰

The authorities at Calcutta were eager¹²¹ to bring about a reconciliation between the Emperor and the Vazir. They accordingly instructed¹²² Messrs Cartier, Smith, and Russell on the occasion of their deputation to the Vazir to proceed to Allahabad and confer with the Emperor on the subject of Shujauddaulah's appointment to the '*Vizarat*.' The deputation were told, "we wish his majesty could be persuaded to think him (Muniruddaulah) an improper person to continue in the royal house."¹²³ As desired by the Governor and Select Committee, the deputation took the Vazir with them to Allahabad¹²⁴ after the conclusion of their treaty with him at Benares where, it may be mentioned, his reconciliation with Muniruddaulah had already been effected.¹²⁵

At Allahabad the deputation succeeded in bringing about the desired rapprochement between the Emperor and the Vazir. The Emperor conferred upon Shujauddaulah the highest honour by clothing him in his own royal habit, and declared that he was now as much pleased with the latter as he had been formerly displeased.¹²⁶ The deputation attributed the Emperor's "great condescension as well as the Vizier's extraordinary humility" to their "desire of acting in a manner the most agreeable to us."¹²⁷

¹¹⁰ Trans. R. 1768, No. 271 C.

¹²⁰ Trans. R. 1768, No. 255.

¹²¹ Beng. Sel. Com., August 3 and 10, 1768.

¹²² Beng. Sel. Com., October 25, 1768.

¹²³ Letter to the Deputation, October 25, 1768.

¹²⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., December 13, 1768.

¹²⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., January 4, 1769.

¹²⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., January 25, 1769.

¹²⁷ Letter from the Deputation, December 31, 1768.

It is interesting to note that the deputation received instructions from the Select Committee to enquire if the Emperor could be prevailed upon to give up Kora and Allahabad to the Vazir in exchange for Ghazipur, Benares and Chunar.¹²⁸ The Select Committee expected the following advantages¹²⁹ from this exchange of territories. Firstly, the dominions of the Emperor would be rendered compact, and would be more easily defended in case of a rupture with the Vazir, for, as the Select Committee explained, "The situation of His Majesty's present domains lies too much within the country of Shuja-ul-Dowlah, insomuch that should we ever come to an open rupture with him to support his majesty, as allies to the throne, we must march through an enemy's country, and thereby subject our troops to many very apparent inconveniences." Secondly, the annual drain¹³⁰ of treasure for the payment of the royal tribute and the subsistence of the English troops at Allahabad would be obviated, for, as the Select Committee anticipated, "Our troops may be withdrawn into these provinces, the King may possibly follow them." Thirdly, Benares, Ghazipur, and Chunar would, according to the Select Committee, "be a strong barrier to us." Lastly, the alliance with the Vazir would be cemented by the transfer of Allahabad and Kora to him, for, as the Select Committee informed¹³¹ the Directors, "The present annual revenues of Korah exceed¹³² those of Ghazipore and Benares . . . this may prove a temptation to Sujah-al-Dowlah, particularly if he

¹²⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., November 29, 1768.

¹²⁹ Letter to the Deputation, November 29, 1768.

¹³⁰ Dow writes strongly against the policy of keeping the Emperor outside Bengal. According to him, the annual drain of £762,500 would have been stopped, if the Emperor had been made to live at Patna or Monghyr, and if the English troops at Allahabad had been recalled to Bengal. *Vide* Dow's *History of Hindostan*, I. pp. cxxi-cxxii.

¹³¹ Letter to Court, January 6, 1769.

¹³² The excess was estimated at about six or seven lakhs of rupees. The Select Committee suggested that the Emperor's loss might be compensated by the recovery of the districts usurped by Hindu Pat.

Beng. Sel. Com., *op. cit.*

considers how very compact his territories will from hence become."

The deputation, however, did not approve¹³³ of the proposed exchange of territories, and raised strong objections to it. They feared that as a result of this exchange the Vazir's position would be immensely strengthened, and he would be "more at liberty to form designing projects against the Company's possessions without our acquiring any accession of security."¹³⁴ They believed further that the Emperor was not likely to come into Bengal from considerations of prestige.¹³⁵ Besides, they urged that Chunar would be an inferior substitute for the fort of Allahabad, and pointed out,¹³⁶ ". . . in the present situation of affairs, we are in fact equally masters of both places." The project was eventually dropped by the authorities on the ground that its execution would be improper while troubles continued in the Deccan.¹³⁷

The reconciliation between the Emperor and the Vazir was apparently so complete that the former proceeded on a hunting excursion to Fyzabad on the 12th of February, 1769.¹³⁸ Apprehending¹³⁹ some undesirable compact between the two princes, Col. Smith accompanied the Emperor in the hope that "his presence would be a check on any secret negotiations to our prejudice."¹⁴⁰ The Emperor reached Fyzabad on the 22nd of February,¹⁴¹ and was highly pleased with the grand reception accorded to him

133 Beng. Sel. Com., January 25, 1769.

134 Letter from the Deputation, January 7, 1769.

135 Letter to Court, January 6, 1769.

The Select Committee had anticipated this difficulty.

136 Letter from the Deputation, *op. cit.*

137 Letter to Court, April 6, 1769.

138 Beng. Sel. Com., March 1, 1769.

The 4th of Shavval, according to Cop. R. 1769, No. 4.

139 Letter from Col. R. Smith, February 12, 1769.

140 Letter from Col. R. Smith, February 25, 1769.

141 Beng. Sel. Com., March 14, 1769.

The 13th of Shavval, according to Cop. R. 1769, No. 4.

by the Vazir.¹⁴² He stayed at Fyzabad for three days,¹⁴³ and such cordiality was established between him and his host that they were described as "two bodies with one soul, connected like milk and sugar."¹⁴⁴

The sudden change in the Emperor's attitude towards the Vazir was by no means due, as was at first suspected¹⁴⁵ by Col. Smith and the Select Committee, to the former's eagerness to obtain the latter's assistance in the annexation of Bundelkhand. The Emperor's ambition soared much higher. In fact, the dream of his life was to sit on the throne of his ancestors and restore the vanished glories of the Delhi empire; and it was because he had now definitely made up his mind to march¹⁴⁶ to Delhi that he sought the friendship and support of his Vazir.

A number of circumstances appear to have influenced the Emperor's decision. Firstly, the queen-mother who was at Delhi repeatedly urged¹⁴⁷ him to come over to the capital. Secondly, Najibuddaulah, the Rohilla Regent at Delhi, represented¹⁴⁸ that he was no longer able to carry on his

¹⁴² Cop. R. 1769, No. 3.

¹⁴³ He left on the 25th of February.

The 16th of Shavval, according to Cop. R. 1769, Nos. 3-4.

¹⁴⁴ Cop. R. 1769, No. 10.

¹⁴⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., March 1, 1769.

Letter to Court, April 6, 1769:

"His visit to the Nabob Sujah-ul-Dowlah gives us cause to suspect that instead of mere compliment it tended principally to the concerting a plan of operations for some future attempt against Bundelkhand country."

¹⁴⁶ Cop. R. 1769, No. 15.

¹⁴⁷ Trans. R. 1768, Nos. 82-3.

Beng. Sel. Com., June 8, 1769.

Col. Smith wrote to the Select Committee on the 9th of May. "The King shewed me a letter he yesterday received from the queen-mother at Delhi wherein she advises him to advance . . . towards his capital."

¹⁴⁸ Trans. R. 1768, No. 253.

Vide also Sir Jadunath Sarkar's *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, p. 549.

duties, and exhorted the Emperor to advance to the capital and defend in person the honour of his family and empire. Thirdly, Madho Rao Scindhia professed attachment, and offered¹⁴⁹ to help the Emperor with a powerful force. Fourthly, offers of help were received from certain Rajput and Sikh chiefs as well.¹⁵⁰ Fifthly, the present distracted state of Northern India was considered¹⁵¹ to be particularly favourable to his prospects. Sixthly, the assassination of Ratan Singh, the Jat ruler of Bharatpur, was regarded as one more favourable circumstance.¹⁵² Lastly, the precipitate retirement¹⁵³ of the Abdali invader was another factor justifying an immediate move to Delhi.

Towards the end of April the Emperor sent¹⁵⁴ for the Vazir to consult¹⁵⁵ him on the present state of affairs in the North, and finally ascertain the measure of assistance the latter was likely to render in connection with his expedition to Delhi. During his conference with the Vazir, the Emperor expressed his firm resolution to proceed to Delhi, and told him, "A vast tract of the country is lying absolutely unoccupied. There is no one there to obstruct or oppose us. The Alus Afghans, the Rohillas, and the Marathas are all

¹⁴⁹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 198.

¹⁵⁰ Trans. R. 1768, Nos. 42, 85, 199.

Letters were received from Jesa Singh, Sikh Sardar, and Madho Singh, Raja of Jaipur.

¹⁵¹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 268.

Beng. Sel. Com., May 19, 1769.

¹⁵² Cop. R. 1769, No. 15.

Beng. Sel. Com., May 19, 1769.

The Jats had already been weakened after the death of his predecessor, Jawahir Singh.

Vide Sir Jadunath Sarkar's *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, p. 550.

¹⁵³ Cop. R. 1769, No. 16.

Beng. Sel. Com., April 5, 1769

¹⁵⁴ Letter from Col. R. Smith, April 25, 1769.

¹⁵⁵ Trans. R. 1769, No. 57.

ready to serve and obey us. You should, therefore, attend our stirrup."¹⁵⁶ The Vazir readily agreed to serve and attend the Emperor for two years, and promised in the presence of Col. Smith "to apply himself with all diligence and earnestness to the strengthening of the Empire, the establishment of the laws and the Royal authority and the promotion of the prosperity of the Auspicious Household."¹⁵⁷ He further promised to employ "whatever ascendancy he might gain over the King's heart" "in promoting the welfare and reputation of the English sardars."¹⁵⁸ The Emperor on his part agreed to "defend and support the honour and reputation, the life and fortune of Shujauddaulah as well as his possessions both old and new," and promised on oath that he would "act in all affairs according to the Vazir's representations."¹⁵⁹

The formal agreement¹⁶⁰ which the Emperor had to execute for the satisfaction of the Vazir shows that the latter exacted more than adequate price for his future services. In the first place, the Emperor promised that he would not listen to the insinuations of "interested men" against the Vazir, and agreed to confer upon him all the honours appertaining to the '*Vizarat*'. In the second place, the Emperor promised to approve whatever the Vazir would represent as conducive "to the glory and advantage of the sublime Sarkar." In the third place, the Emperor promised to agree to whatever might promote "the advantage of the English." In the fourth place, the Emperor promised to "espouse his (Vazir's) friends and oppose his (Vazir's) enemies on all occasions." In the fifth place, the Emperor promised to grant the Vazir a

¹⁵⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., May 19, 1769.

¹⁵⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., *op. cit.*
Cop. R. 1769, No. 19.

¹⁵⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., *op. cit.*
Cop. R. 1769, No. 17.

¹⁵⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., *op. cit.*
Cop. R. 1769, No. 18 A.

¹⁶⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., *op. cit.*
Cop. R. 1769, No. 18.

'*sanad*' for "the established as well as the extraordinary jagirs together with all the advantages appertaining to the *Vizarat*." In the sixth place, the Emperor promised to assign to the Vazir "a moiety of all our conquests," excepting the '*Khalisah Sharifah*' and what might be required for the Emperor's personal expenses. In the seventh place, the Emperor promised "to conduct all military operations" according to the Vazir's advice. In the eighth place, the Emperor promised to confer on his brother Shujauddaulah the *Vizarat* "as an inalienable and perpetual office." In the last place, the Emperor promised to grant "the employments about the young princes" to the Vazir's sons. In short, the Emperor was so anxious to obtain the Vazir's assistance that he cheerfully subscribed to every one of the terms that the latter chose to dictate.

Early in May the Emperor informed the Governor¹⁶¹ of his final decision to leave Allahabad, and asked for the assistance of "a trusty Sardar with two battalions and eight pieces of artillery."¹⁶² He complained that he had already resided for four years¹⁶³ at Allahabad, and had written two letters¹⁶⁴ to "his brother, dear as life, the King of England," for assistance, but had received no reply. His income at Allahabad, he represented, was no more than fifty lakhs, while his expenses were more than seventy lakhs. He stated that under the present circumstances it was impossible for him to prolong his stay at Allahabad; besides he was convinced that¹⁶⁵ the

¹⁶¹ Beng. Sel. Com., May 19, 1769.

¹⁶² Trans. R. 1769, No. 56.

¹⁶³ The Emperor's grievance was that he had little freedom at Allahabad. He had to live outside the fort, and even there he was "not free from insult." Even the usual court music was disallowed by Col. Smith, as it disturbed his sleep. *Vide Siyar* (Lucknow Text), p. 774, and M. Gentil, *Memoires*, p. 259.

¹⁶⁴ Cop. R. 1769, No. 15.

¹⁶⁵ Letter from Col. R. Smith, May 1, 1769: "I plainly see," he (Emperor) said, "that you will not march from hence, and it is impossible for me long to remain here with my hands before me (at the same time crossing his hands, as if bound)."

English did not mean to escort him to Delhi. He also reminded¹⁶⁶ the Governor that Lord Clive had promised¹⁶⁷ to grant him military assistance whenever he should resolve on an expedition to the Capital. This assistance he now claimed, as he had firmly determined to proceed to Delhi.¹⁶⁸

The Emperor's requisition was considered¹⁶⁹ by the Select Committee at their meeting of the 19th of May. Verelst who was at Murshidabad during these days had already written to the Select Committee recommending the grant of assistance to the Emperor on the grounds,¹⁷⁰ firstly, that military help had been promised by his predecessor, secondly, that the departure of the Emperor would afford the Select Committee "the most favourable opportunity" for withdrawing the Third Brigade from Allahabad, and thirdly, that the English could not justly refuse to comply with the request of the Emperor to whom they were "under many substantial obligations." Col. Smith had also written¹⁷¹ from Allahabad in favour of the Emperor, his arguments being, firstly, that the connection with the latter was like "a millstone about our necks," hence his departure would be a relief to the English, and secondly, that if the English were not allowed to attend the Emperor, there would be "an open field for the artful insinuations of our rivals" (i.e., Frenchmen in the Vazir's service).

During the discussions at the Select Committee meeting Mr. Cartier¹⁷² urged compliance with the Emperor's request on the grounds, firstly, that the English would neither "take part

¹⁶⁶ Letter from the Governor to the Select Committee, May 13, 1769.

¹⁶⁷ Letter from Clive to Col. R. Smith, December 28, 1766: "... we might be prevailed upon to spare the King one or two battalions of sepoy, and a few Europeans as a body-guard."

¹⁶⁸ Even the date of departure appears to have been fixed. "On the 15th of Muharram we shall commence our auspicious march."

Ibid Cop. R. 1769, No. 15.

¹⁶⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., May 19, 1769.

¹⁷⁰ Letter from the Governor, *op. cit.*

¹⁷¹ Letter from Col. R. Smith, May 1, 1769.

¹⁷² Minute of Mr. J. Cartier, May 19, 1769.

as principals," nor would they make "additions to their present territorial acquisitions," secondly, that the grant of two battalions would cause "a very inconsiderable diminution to our force," thirdly, that the refusal of assistance "would be a piece of ingratitude," and would amount to "throwing off the mask," and lastly, that "the present situation of affairs at Delhi" was "favourable." But, Messrs Floyer and Alexander strongly opposed the opinion of the majority. Mr. Floyer pointed out¹⁷³ that in his last letter to the Select Committee Clive had positively warned¹⁷⁴ them against engaging in an expedition to Delhi. He thought, therefore, that no man in the Company's service should be permitted to accompany the Emperor, for the Directors would "make us responsible for the consequences." Mr. Alexander also rightly urged that¹⁷⁵ more help was bound to be demanded in future, which, if denied, would cause greater displeasure than would be caused by immediate refusal.

As the Governor, and Messrs Cartier and Smith were in favour of acceding to the Emperor's request, it was finally resolved to furnish him¹⁷⁶ with two battalions under the command of Capt. Harper, and four field-pieces¹⁷⁷ of the smallest calibre. It is noteworthy that Messrs Floyer and Alexander had their dissent recorded. The decision of the majority was indeed hasty and impolitic. They did not realize the gravity of the risks involved in a march to Delhi; and it is surprising to find that Verelst gave his assent regardless of the repeated

¹⁷³ Minute of Mr. C. Floyer, May 19, 1769.

¹⁷⁴ "... a march to Delhi would be not only a vain and fruitless project, but attended with certain destruction to your army, and perhaps put a period to the very being of the Company in Bengal." Letter from Lord Clive, Beng. Sel. Com., January 16, 1767.

¹⁷⁵ Minute of Mr. J. Alexander, May 19, 1769.

¹⁷⁶ Letter to Col. R. Smith, May 19, 1769.

¹⁷⁷ On the Emperor's representation (*vide* Letter from Col. R. Smith, May 3, 1769) the Select Committee subsequently resolved to grant him 600 "good English firelocks" as well.

Beng. Sel. Com., June 8, 1769.

warnings¹⁷⁸ of the Directors. It was fortunate that the Emperor postponed his departure of his own accord, and the authorities were not called upon for the present to grant him the aid they had promised.¹⁷⁹

At the moment when arrangements for the Emperor's departure were nearing completion, an incident¹⁸⁰ occurred, which temporarily upset the Emperor's plans. One day some royal troops surrounded Muniruddaulah at the palace gate, and demanded higher pay and some arrears in a threatening manner. The latter rebuked them in abusive language, whereupon one of the men instantly drew his sword, and struck at the old minister. Muniruddaulah, however, escaped unhurt owing to the heroism and presence of mind shown by a faithful attendant who rushed in front of his master and took the stroke on his own arm. No arrears were actually due to those men ; and it was¹⁸¹ apparent that a conspiracy had been set on foot to murder the old minister. Most of the courtiers bore ill-feeling against him, while the Emperor himself was known to be displeased with him on account of his opposition¹⁸² to the proposed march to Delhi. Soon after this incident Muniruddaulah left¹⁸³ the court on grounds of old age and ill-health, and escaped to Calcutta to seek the protection of the Governor.

At this very time three battalions in the Vazir's army mutinied¹⁸⁴ for want of pay. The mutiny was eventually quelled¹⁸⁵ with the help of the English troops stationed with the Vazir. The revolt of these battalions which were "the oldest, the best armed, and the best disciplined"¹⁸⁶ in the whole force naturally shook¹⁸⁷ the Vazir's confidence in his troops, and chilled his ardour for joining the Emperor in his ambitious venture. Col. Smith reported, "The Nabob's military force is very considerably reduced . . . it will cost him a length of time and much trouble to supply this reduction."¹⁸⁸

The unexpected postponement of the Emperor's departure was publicly ascribed to the approach of the rainy season.¹⁸⁹ As a matter of fact, however, there were other and more serious reasons.¹⁹⁰ Firstly, the attempt on Muniruddaulah's life within the precincts of the royal palace itself created "a universal jealousy and suspicion throughout the court." Secondly, the sudden departure of the minister "brought many inconveniences on the King's affairs which require some time to remedy." Thirdly, the mutiny of the Vazir's troops "was another disagreeable circumstance." Fourthly, the Vazir counselled delay and represented to the Emperor that "it was highly necessary to make a proper arrangement of affairs at home." Fifthly, the Rohillas showed no inclination to join the Emperor, and did not return "any plain answer to the

¹⁸⁴ Letter from Capt. G. Harper, May 25, 1769.

¹⁸⁵ Letter from Capt. G. Harper to Col. R. Smith, May 29, 1769.

Letter from the Vazir to Col. R. Smith. Received June 1, 1769.

¹⁸⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., June 10, 1769.

¹⁸⁷ Letter from Col. R. Smith, June 26, 1769.

¹⁸⁸ Letter from Col. R. Smith, May 27, 1769.

¹⁸⁹ Cop. R. 1769, No. 60.

¹⁹⁰ Letter from Col. R. Smith, June 8, 1769. (Beng. Sel. Com., June 20, 1769.)

Letter from Col. R. Smith, June 26, 1769 (Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.)

Letter from the Governor to the Select Committee. (Beng. Sel. Com., December 16, 1769.)

letters which have been sent to require their attendance." Sixthly, it was apprehended that the Jats might "purchase the assistance of either Mahrattas or Seyks," and thus oppose the royal designs. Seventhly, the Emperor had not also been able to collect funds "sufficient for the successful termination of their expedition." Lastly, the timely announcement made by Col. Smith that "no other reinforcement would be sent" had a sobering effect on the Emperor.

Chagrined at the miscarriage of his plans, the Emperor turned his attention to Muniruddaulah's accounts, and asked the Governor to reject whatever the latter might say or write, and regard as "void and forged whatever letters he presents in His Majesty's name."¹⁹¹ Evidently suspecting defalcations on the part of his fallen minister, the Emperor deputed Fazl Ali Khan to Calcutta to examine Muniruddaulah's accounts.¹⁹² Fazl Ali Khan was known to be a personal enemy of the latter, and was alleged to have taken a leading part¹⁹³ in the attempt made on his life. It is interesting to note that the Governor on this occasion wrote a strongly worded note¹⁹⁴ to the Emperor, and in dignified language rebuked the latter for having unjustly found fault with Muniruddaulah who had served the royal house for the last fourteen years, and had discharged his duties with loyalty and uprightness. In the course of this letter, the Governor roundly condemned the evil designs of "low and poverty-stricken persons" at court who had gained the Emperor's confidence by unworthy means, and had brought "the affairs of the auspicious household" to a state of utter confusion. Finally, to mark his displeasure, the Governor not only did not recognize Fazl Ali Khan's mission, but also refused to accept the 'Khilats' sent by the Emperor through him.¹⁹⁵ The stern remonstrance of the Governor had the desired effect, for the Emperor in his

¹⁹¹ Cop. R. 1769, No. 70.

¹⁹² Trans. R. 1769, No. 186.

¹⁹³ Cop. I, 1769-70, No. 113.

¹⁹⁴ Cop. I, 1769-70, No. 93.

¹⁹⁵ Cop. I, 1769-70, Nos. 99 and 113.

reply professed his regard for Muniruddaulah, and expressed his appreciation of "the fidelity and attachment of his well-beloved English Sardars."¹⁹⁶

The last few months of Verelst's regime saw no important change in the royal affairs. Under repeated orders¹⁹⁷ of the Directors, the Third Brigade was at last recalled¹⁹⁸ from Allahabad, but in deference to the request¹⁹⁹ of the Emperor two battalions were allowed to stay with him. Lieut Col. Gailliez, the Commanding Officer at Allahabad, was informed by the Select Committee in October that orders had been issued to supply the Emperor "with 700 stand of arms," if the latter "should actually undertake a march to Delhi."²⁰⁰ He was further told that directions would also be issued for sending up two light field-pieces for each of the supernumerary battalions of sepoys belonging to the Emperor. Early in December the Select Committee again instructed²⁰¹ him to order the 9th and the 19th battalions of sepoys to accompany the Emperor in case the latter decided to leave for Delhi.

In one²⁰² of his last letters to the Emperor, Verelst expressed his regret that "owing to the deficiency of their troops" and "the unsuitability of the time," the English had not yet ventured to establish him on the throne of his ancestors, but he assured the Emperor that the English were not "flatterers", and that they "would never go back upon their words, nor fail His Majesty on the day of trial." The Governor, however, cautioned the Emperor against "liars who show wheat, but sell barley," and advised him "not to permit the mirror of his sacred heart to be dimmed by the stories of the crafty!"

¹⁹⁶ Trans. R. 1769, No. 194.

¹⁹⁷ "... we are impatient to hear our troops are recalled from Allahabad." Letter from Court, March 16, 1768.

¹⁹⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., August 11, 1769.

Beng. Sel. Com., September 25, 1769.

¹⁹⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., May 13, 1769.

²⁰⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., October 12, 1769.

²⁰¹ Beng. Sel. Com., December 1, 1769.

²⁰² Cop. 1, 1769-70, No. 45.

CHAPTER VII

THE DISPUTES WITH THE FRENCH

The Anglo-French relations in Bengal during the Governorship of Verelst were none too cordial, and were marked by continual jealousies and disputes. The authorities at Chandernagore envied the political ascendancy of their English rivals, and fretted against the increasing restriction of their own freedom and trade. The English on the other hand suspected secret and hostile designs on the part of their disgruntled neighbours, and were ever on the alert, lest the latter should seriously attempt to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the country.

The French authorities complained of interruption to their trade from the very beginning¹ of Verelst's administration. Towards the end of March, 1767, they sent² a deputation to Calcutta to acquaint the Governor with their manifold grievances.³ Messrs. Sinfray and Rouland, deputies from the Council of Chandernagore, represented,⁴ firstly, that the customs officials had lately begun to detain and search their boats at every 'chauki,' causing thereby unnecessary delay as well as expense, secondly, that the English 'gumashtahs' abused their influence, and deliberately obstructed the French trade, thirdly, that the weavers were not allowed to work for the French Company, and thirdly, that the officials of the 'Nizamat' often disregarded the privileges of the French Company, and refused to do justice.⁵

¹ Beng. Pub. Cons., February 2, 1767.

² Letter to Court, March 30, 1767.

³ Beng. Pub. Cons., March 30, 1767.

⁴ *Vide* "Remonstrance" of Messrs Sinfray and Rouland, March 24, 1767.

⁵ Cop. I. 1766—67, Nos. 135—37. The Faujdar of Hooghly was, for instance, reported to have summoned a French subject to attend his court at Hooghly. "This," the French authorities complained, "is unjust, and means a violation of the privileges the French have been enjoying for a long time."

In reply to the remonstrance of the deputation, the Governor pointed out⁶ that the boats of the European Companies had always been detained at every recognized 'chauki', and were also liable to be searched, if full particulars of the goods were not stated in the 'dastaks'. He further explained that no new duties had been imposed on the French goods, and that the customs regulations were the same for all classes of merchants including the English who too had to pay the usual duties and allow their boats to be searched, if necessary. As regards the complaints of high-handedness on the part of the Company's 'gumashtahs' and the Nawab's officials, the Governor readily agreed to make necessary enquiries and redress "every real grievance", and finally assured the deputation that he had already issued instructions⁷ to the English 'gumashtahs' and the Nizamat officials not to impede the trade of the French Company, or give them any reasonable cause for offence.⁸

The principal grievance⁹ of the French was, however, their want of a sufficient number of weavers, which was admittedly¹⁰ caused by the recent enlargement of the English investment in silk goods. This is why both the French and the Dutch pressed for an equitable partition¹¹ or "enumeration" of all the available weavers in different 'arangs'. The Governor and Council at Chandernagore complained¹² in May

⁶ Letter to the Council of Chandernagore, March 27, 1767.

⁷ Beng. Pub. Cons., February 2, 1767.

"... we have repeated our orders that their people (i.e., the French gumashtahs) be not molested in any shape whatever."

⁸ Cop. P. L. I. 1766-67, No. 4.

⁹ Letter to Court, March 17, 1767.

Bolts: Considerations etc., pp. 73, 192 etc.

¹⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., March 10, 1767.

Beng. Sel. Com., July 6, 1767.

Letter to Court, March 28, 1767.

¹¹ Beng. Pub. Cons., May 20, 1767.

¹² Letter from the Governor and Council at Chandernagore, May 6, 1767.

that the Nabob's officials still interfered with trade, and protested in particular against the conduct of Raja Maha Singh¹³ of Dacca, who had "sent people into the jungles to take our cloths out of the hands of the weavers whom he has forbid to continue to work for us before the business of your nation was finished."¹⁴ The Governor in his reply to the authorities at Chandernagore maintained that complaints were "reciprocal", and that it was not possible to retain "by violence the free-born manufacturers of the country." He, however, instructed¹⁵ the Chief at Dacca to inquire into the conduct of Raja Maha Singh and restrain¹⁶ him, if found actually guilty of the alleged highhandedness. It is interesting to note that the Governor indignantly repudiated the insinuation that the acts of violence reported by the French agents were inspired by the English, and challenged the French Governor "to produce one single instance of our having exercised an undue influence to the prejudice of your affairs."¹⁷

The French authorities bitterly recriminated¹⁸ that the English 'gumashtahs' regularly abused their authority, and managed to elude the orders issued from Calcutta. They wrote on the 27th of May, "Our complaints far from diminishing seem to multiply."¹⁹ The Governor thereupon informed them that commissaries had already been appointed to investigate into the alleged abuses, and asked for their co-operation in the enquiry now in progress.²⁰ Following the example of

¹³ In the proceedings the name is 'Maw Sing.'

¹⁴ Letter from the Governor and Council at Chandernagore, May 15, 1767.

¹⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., May 20, 1767.

¹⁶ "It is not in our power to remove or displace him." (Beng. Pub. Cons., *op. cit.*)

¹⁷ Letter to the Governor and Council at Chandernagore, May 20, 1767.

¹⁸ Beng. Pub. Cons., May 30, 1767.

¹⁹ Letter from the Governor and Council at Chandernagore, May 27, 1767.

²⁰ Letter to the Governor and Council at Chandernagore, May 30, 1767.

the Dutch, the French refused²¹ to participate in the work of the aforesaid commission of inquiry, and insisted on a fair partition of the weavers in the manner formerly agreed²² to by Clive. The authorities at Calcutta had, however, meanwhile decided²³ not to allow the proposed partition of weavers. They accordingly informed the French in July²⁴ that "upon maturely weighing the matter and taking the advice of the ministry" they had been convinced of "the impracticability and ill consequences" of a partition of weavers among the European Companies.

Meanwhile, an incident²⁵ had occurred at Patna, which would serve to illustrate how commercial rivalry not infrequently led to acts of aggression on the part of the servants of the rival European Companies. M. Carvalho, Chief of the French Factory at Patna, complained²⁶ in May against certain English 'gumashtahs' who had molested his agents and compelled "the inhabitants to sell their opium to the English," although he "had already made advances" for the same. As, Shitab Ray "would not concern himself"²⁷ in this matter, M. Carvalho forcibly imprisoned one of the English 'gumashtahs' in the French Factory.²⁸ The English 'gumashtahs' on their part seized a number of French 'gumashtahs' as a retaliatory measure. M. Carvalho thereupon sent a 'vakil' to represent the matter to Shitab Ray, but, according to M. Carvalho's allegation,²⁹ the vakil was assaulted

²¹ Beng. Pub. Cons., July 11, 1767.

²² Letter from the Governor and Council at Chandernagore, June 18, 1767.

²³ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 8, 1767.

²⁴ Letter to the Governor and Council at Chandernagore, July 11, 1767.

²⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 8, 1767.

Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, May 28, 1767.

²⁶ Letter from Mons. A. Carvalho to Mr. T. Rumbold, May 18, 1767.

²⁷ Letter from Mons. A. Carvalho to the Governor, May 24, 1767.
Beng. Pub. Cons., June 18, 1767.

²⁸ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold to Mons. A. Carvalho, May 23, 1767.

²⁹ Letter from Mons. A. Carvalho to Mr. T. Rumbold, May 23, 1767.

by Mr. Rumbold "with his own hand." The latter retorted with a different version³⁰ of the affair, and denied having ever assaulted the 'vakil.' He alleged³¹ that before Shitab Ray could complete his enquiry into the complaints against the English 'gumashtahs,' M. Carvalho had taken the law into his own hands, and had imprisoned an English 'gumashtah' in the French Factory. It is noteworthy that the Governor and Council offered³² to institute a public enquiry into this affair by two members of the Patna Council in the presence of M. Carvalho, but the French authorities do not appear to have availed of this offer. A few months later, M. Carvalho was once again reported to have imprisoned an 'amil' of the Government on grounds which appeared after careful examination by Shitab Ray to be wholly untenable.³³ Although incidents such as these were no more than mere exhibition of bad temper, they served to aggravate the already strained relations between the English and the French in Bengal.

Rivalry³⁴ in inland trade was at the root of most of the quarrels between the English and the French authorities. Early in November, Mr. Sykes, Resident at the Durbar, reported,³⁵ "Mr. Chevalier appears to me to be aiming at carrying on a trade throughout the country on the same footing that we do, and has established goomastahs at many places for the purchase of rice, grain, and other articles which they never before dealt in." Mr. Sykes accordingly warned³⁶ the authorities that unless the French were restrained immediately,

³⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons., July 11, 1767.

³¹ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, June 30, 1767.

³² Letter to the Governor and Council at Chandernagore, July 11, 1767.

³³ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 374.

³⁴ Orders were issued in the name of the Nawab and Muhammad Riza Khan to the Chiefs of the French, Dutch, and Danish Factories, prohibiting their trade in salt, betelnut, and tobacco. (*Vide* Beng. Sel. Com., October 13, 1767.) This naturally caused great heartburning among the rivals of the English.

³⁵ Letter from Mr. F. Sykes, November 9, 1767.

³⁶ Letter from Mr. F. Sykes, November 10, 1767.

they would endeavour "to undermine our trade." The Select Committee at once took up a strong attitude, and resolved to confine the rival European Companies "to the precise bounds of their trade in imports and exports, agreeably to the letter and spirit of their charter."³⁷ Mr. Sykes was instructed³⁸ to put a stop to the inland trade of the French with the assistance of the authorities³⁹ at Murshidabad.

As desired⁴⁰ by Mr. Sykes, Muhammad Riza Khan issued strict regulations⁴¹ for restraining "the illicit trade" of the Europeans. These regulations were circulated to all zamindars and officers of the Government. The latter were directed, firstly, to suffer only those 'gumashtahs' to reside in the districts under their jurisdiction, who had regular 'parwanahs' under the seal of the Nawab, the Company, or the Governor, secondly to prevent the 'gumashtahs' from buying or selling articles which were not specified in their 'parwanahs,' thirdly, to disallow the use of force or compulsion against the ryots or the 'gumashtahs,' and in case of disobedience on the part of the latter to report such cases to Murshidabad, fourthly, to exert their influence and authority in the suppression of all abuses in connection with inland trade, fifthly, to seize and to send those 'gumashtahs' to Murshidabad, who should be found trading in salt, betelnut, tobacco, and grain in the name of the French, the Dutch, or other foreigners, sixthly, to enforce the collection of the prescribed customs duties and check all illegal charges, and lastly, to afford every encouragement and protection to the merchants and inhabitants of the country, and relieve the poor from oppression.

These regulations were of course meant to suppress the inland trade of the French and other Europeans, but it may be

³⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., November 17, 1767.

³⁸ Letter to Mr. F. Sykes, November 17, 1767.

³⁹ The Nawab himself had recently asked for a prohibition of the inland trade of the Europeans. Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 381.

⁴⁰ Letter from Mr. F. Sykes, November 25, 1767.

⁴¹ Beng. Sel. Com., November 29, 1767.

noted that the Governor was always ready to remove all just grievances of the latter in the matter of their recognised sea-borne trade. For example, when M. Chevalier complained⁴² that the 'chaukidars' levied double duties on the French goods, the Governor promptly took action to stop such illegal exactions, and directed Muhammad Riza Khan and the Faujdar of Hooghly to punish such abuses of authority on the part of the customs officials.⁴³ But, however, much the authorities might tolerate the regular trade of the French under instructions from the Directors,⁴⁴ they would not allow their rivals to extend their inland trade on any pretence whatsoever. Early in December, the Governor issued strict orders to Muhammad Riza Khan, directing him "to confine the French Company to their fixed bounds." The Governor reminded him that it was "most unreasonable that the inland trade of the provinces, which the English themselves have curtailed, should still be laid open to the French."⁴⁵ Muhammad Riza Khan was thereafter so strict in his attitude towards the French that he once refused⁴⁶ to allow their agents to reside in Sylhet for manufacturing lime, lest they should set on foot an illicit trade in rice, cloth, opium, and other necessary commodities in that remote district. The malpractices of the French 'gumashtahs'⁴⁷ who, according to Mr. Sykes, often endeavoured "to assume an authority independent of the Government's officers"⁴⁸ were thus effectively checked. The French authorities were also compelled to discontinue their unlawful grant of 'dastaks' to local merchants.⁴⁹

⁴² Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 203.

⁴³ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 216.

⁴⁴ Letter from Court, May 17, 1766.

⁴⁵ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 219A.

⁴⁶ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 461.

⁴⁷ Letter to Court, September 13, 1768.

⁴⁸ Letter from Mr. F. Sykes, November 25, 1767.

⁴⁹ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 223.

The extent to which the French found themselves restricted in their trade will be best judged from an interesting despatch⁵⁰ which M. Chevalier wrote on the subject to de Boigne, Minister of Marine and the Colonies, on the 6th of September, 1768. The relevant portions of the despatch may be thus freely translated: "Our privileges are no longer considered fit to be recognised. Our passports are no more valid. Our colours are insulted from all sides. Our boats are stopped and rummaged, and new custom duties are imposed upon us, from which we were always exempted. The end of such a revolting conduct is clear; we are going to be forced to renounce our commerce. The English know well that it would be indecent to make their name appear in these vexatious affairs. They act in the name of the Nawab; the latter is but a paid servant of theirs, constrained to act conformably to their wishes. They have recently made him publish a new decree which absolutely prohibits all branches of our trade in this country; and all Frenchmen who penetrate into these provinces for the purpose of trade are sure to be arrested and imprisoned. It is in vain that we complain and ask for justice. The English order the Nawab to perpetrate iniquities with which the latter himself is disgusted; for at the bottom of his heart he desires only to favour us. In short, the jealousy of the English has reached a point which cannot be endured. In a position like this it is certain that we have nothing more to hope for, and that we can regard India as absolutely lost to us."

In March, 1768, the Governor brought to the notice of the Select Committee that the French were transmitting large quantities of silver to Pondicherry, and as the scarcity of specie was already acute in the province, the Select Committee resolved⁵¹ to put a stop to the future exportation of bullion

⁵⁰ For the original despatch in French vide *'Bengal: Past and Present,'* Vol. XVI, p. 130. Unfortunately, it has not been translated there. The above translation is the present writer's own.

⁵¹ Beng. Sel. Com., March 31, 1768.

from Bengal. At the suggestion⁵² of Mr. Sykes, the Governor represented⁵³ to the Emperor that the French, the Dutch, and other European nations brought little silver into this country, and not only carried on their trade by receiving money here and giving drafts⁵⁴ on their Companies at home, but also exported⁵⁵ large sums of money out of Bengal, thereby accentuating the growing scarcity⁵⁶ of coin in these provinces. To oblige the Governor, the Emperor of course, readily issued a royal 'farman,'⁵⁷ prohibiting the export of bullion from Bengal.

The 'farman'⁵⁸ runs thus: "As the good of mankind and the welfare of countries has always been the chief study of great kings, former Emperors, out of their bounty, benevolence, and love of their subjects, were graciously pleased to grant the privilege of trade to several European nations, that they might bring here their own commodities, and in benefiting the people of this country, benefit themselves in return by exporting the manufactures of this country, and thus promote the mutual advantage of both the peoples. At present His fortunate and

⁵² Mr. Sykes complained in April, ". . . . the Shroffs on the smallest intimation of being obliged to exchange their money have declared their intention of shutting up their shops and quitting the city complaints of a similar nature are made to me from many of the considerable districts."

⁵³ It is worth noticing that the authorities wanted to use the Emperor's name to stop the export of bullion from Bengal. After all, the legal fiction of the Emperor's authority still held good!

⁵⁴ The French authorities induced the Company's servants to send their remittances through them by offering more favourable terms. But, the authorities at Calcutta informed the Directors in December, 1767, that the French had lately "reduced their exchange on bills granted on their constituents to twentysix pence for the current rupee, or one penny lower than the exchange allowed to your servants." Letter to Court, December 16, 1767. *Vide* also the letters of Mr. Richard Barwell (Bengal: Past and Present, Vol. IX, pp. 172—74).

⁵⁵ Letter to Court, September, 13, 1767.

⁵⁶ *Siyar* (Lucknow Text), p. 783.

⁵⁷ *Beng. Sel. Com.*, July 23, 1768.

⁵⁸ The 'Farman' is dated 7th of *Rabi II.* 9 *Julus*.

propitious Majesty has been informed that the European nations bring in a small quantity of bullion into the country and export a great quantity of coin out of it. Since these practices are the occasion of great distress to His Majesty's subjects, and disadvantageous to the Empire, paying regard therefore to the prosperity of the country and the welfare of its inhabitants, His Majesty has issued his Royal farman to all European nations that whatever quantity of bullion and merchandise they bring here, they should take its equivalent in the commodities of this country in return, and not carry with them home more than the value of the bullion. They are also ordered to desist from exporting money without an order from the *Nizamat*. In case they act contrary thereto, they shall be caused to pay the *Sarkar* a penalty of double the quantity they export and forfeit the liberty of trade which former kings as well as the present were graciously pleased to grant them. It is likewise necessary that they should give a list of the goods they export and import to the *Baksh-bandar*⁵⁹ that it may pass His Majesty's august cognizance. Let therefore all the world, as it regards His Majesty's high displeasure, pay due obedience to this command."

The enforcement⁶⁰ of this 'farman' gave rise to serious disputes with the French late in 1768. 'Chaukis' were stationed from Chandernagore down to Hijli to search all vessels under French colours, and seize whatever bullion might be found in any of them.⁶¹ The French authorities bitterly protested against this new interdiction, and would not readily agree to have their boats and ships searched. M. Chevalier sent a strong remonstrance⁶² against "the unjust and violent proceedings" of the Faujdar of Hooghly, under whose orders all the French boats that passed down the river were being detained and searched, and urged that in cases of

⁵⁹ The Customs Officer at Hooghly.

⁶⁰ Abs. I. 1766—71, No. 148.

⁶¹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 320.

⁶² Trans. R. 1768, No. 9A.

necessity he was sometimes obliged to export small sums of money to different settlements, adding significantly, "Every individual and merchant is master of his own property, and has the power to send it wherever he thinks proper."

In December there were serious clashes between the French and the 'chauki' people. Once while a French boat was detained by the 'chauki' at Chatra for the usual search, the Frenchman on the boat violently assaulted three peons, and made off with one of the wounded men and three of the 'chauki' boats to Serampur.⁶³ The men were forcibly carried on board and the boats were detained alongside of the French ships anchored at Serampur. A few days later, when two French boats were again stopped by the same 'chauki' at Chatra, the crews of the boats pelted the peons with sticks and stones, wounded one of the 'dandis,' bruised many others seriously, and continued to act in this manner till they arrived at Serampur. The Faujdar of Hooghly complained to the Governor that if the French persisted in behaving in this outrageous manner, it would not be possible for the 'chaukis' to search their boats, except by taking recourse to hostilities.⁶⁴ Mohammad Riza Khan likewise represented⁶⁵ that the French were not willing to pay heed to the royal orders, and were bent⁶⁶ upon quarrelling with "the people belonging to the *Sarkar*."

The obduracy of the French authorities, however, could not continue long. Muhammad Riza Khan eventually threatened strong measures against them, and warned M. Chevalier⁶⁷ that if he did not desist from exporting money from the country, the entire French trade in Bengal would be put an end to.⁶⁸ Strict orders were issued to the 'chaukis' to search

⁶³ Trans. R. 1768, No. 333.

⁶⁴ Trans. R. 1768, No. 342.

⁶⁵ Trans. R. 1769, No. 3.

⁶⁶ Trans. 1769, No. 4.

⁶⁷ Trans. R. 1769, No. 9.

⁶⁸ Trans. R. 1769, No. 9B.

every French ship, and confiscate the money that might be found in any of them. As, however, the French still paid no regard to the repeated warnings of Muhammad Riza Khan and the Faujdar of Hooghly, orders were issued early in 1769 in the name of the Nawab for a blockade of Chandernagore. According to a contemporary account,⁶⁹ the French opened fire on the peons sent to surround the town, as a result of which many were reported to have been killed and wounded. Reprisals were forthwith ordered, and a free fight ensued between the Nawab's people and the French, in which the latter ultimately came off worst. A French ship was seized, a number of houses at Chandernagore were pulled down, and the French trade was practically dislocated. This appears to have brought the French authorities to their senses, for they submitted shortly afterwards, whereupon the ship was restored to them.

Among the conditions of the restoration of Chandernagore to the French after the conclusion of the Seven Years' War was that no new fortifications should be constructed there in future.⁷⁰ The authorities at Calcutta were extremely strict on this point, and their most serious quarrel with the French during Verelst's term of office was incidentally over a ditch excavated by the French ostensibly to provide for a proper drainage of the town of Chandernagore.

Late in 1767 the Faujdar of Hooghly reported to Muhammad Riza Khan that the French were erecting some fortifications at Chandernagore on the plea of constructing a drain round the town.⁷¹ Muhammad Riza Khan promptly sent an officer with a troop of horse,⁷² and ordered⁷³ the

⁶⁹ *Vide* Memoir of Colonel Thomas Deans Pearse of the Bengal Artillery (Bengal: Past and Present, Vol. II, pp. 311-12). Letter from Col Pearse to a friend at Allahabad, February 23, 1769.

⁷⁰ According to Article XI of the Treaty of Paris, the French engaged "not to erect fortifications, or to keep troops, in any part of the Subah of Bengal." *Vide* also Grose: *Voyage to the East Indies*, II, pp. 477-78.

⁷¹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 433.

⁷² Trans. R. 1768, No. 445.

⁷³ *Muzaffar-Namah* (Alld. Univ. MS.), p. 437.

Faujdar to stop the progress of the ditch. While fully approving of "the spirited conduct"⁷⁴ of Muhammad Riza Khan, the Governor ordered the postponement⁷⁵ of any strong action for the present in order to make the necessary enquiries from the French Governor about the object and nature of the works under construction. In reply to Verelst's representations,⁷⁶ M. Chevalier assured the Governor towards the end of December that "the work carrying on there was only a ditch round the town with drains to carry off the water which in the rainy season makes it very unhealthy," and finally offered to have the ditch examined by an English engineer "as well for our satisfaction as for that of the country government."⁷⁷

In January, 1768, Capt. Martin, Chief Engineer, was deputed by the Governor to inspect and report on the character of the ditch in question. Capt. Martin carefully examined the excavations and reported⁷⁸ that he could detect nothing in the works in the nature of a fortification.⁷⁹ It appears from his report that the ditch was 38 ft. broad, and from 12 to 15 ft. deep in different parts, and that four hundred workmen were employed daily for this work. Capt. Martin seems to have been fully convinced that the ditch was meant only to divert the waters which annually flooded⁸⁰ the town in the rains. The authorities thereupon decided to offer no obstruction to the

⁷⁴ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 219A.

⁷⁵ Trans. I. 1766-68, No. 230.

⁷⁶ Letter to Court, February 29, 1768.

⁷⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., February 10, 1768.

⁷⁸ Letter from Capt. F. Martin, January 28, 1768.

⁷⁹ Letter to Court, February 9, 1768. ". . . . (Capt. Martin) . . . has given it as his opinion that it could not, in any degree, be deemed a fortification, or answer any other purpose than what Mr. Chevalier assured the President it was intended."

⁸⁰ "Mr. Chevalier informed me that several children have been carried away and the houses have suffered in their foundations."

Letter from Capt. F. Martin, *op. cit.*, It was in execution of an elaborate drainage scheme that the "digue d'enciente" was excavated to take off the outflow from the drains of the town. *Vide* Stavorinus: *Voyage to the East Indies*, I. p. 529, etc.

work in question, and no objections were in fact raised by them for more than a year.

Early next year, however, the excavations for the ditch were reported to have assumed such proportions as to create the suspicion that they were in fact intended to be used as defensive earthworks. The Governor accordingly directed Lieut.-Col. Campbell, Chief Engineer, to make extensive enquiries and report on the present state of the works. The latter, it is interesting to note, managed⁸¹ to inspect the ditch incognito before presenting his credentials to the French authorities.

Lieut.-Col. Campbell's report contains a vivid description of the state of the works, and deserves to be quoted in full. He wrote⁸² to Mr. Cartier⁸³ as follows :

“ Lest I should have been disappointed in obtaining that information which Mr. Verelst requested relative to the French Drain at Chandernagore, I thought it best upon learning at Chinsura that there was a large body of Cooleys employed upon the excavation to visit the work before I waited on M. Chevalier, and have the pleasure to acquaint you, Sir, that I succeeded so well on the undertaking as to examine the greatest part of it, before the French Governor had any intelligence of my arrival.

“ I found this Ditch or Drain as the French are pleased to term it about three miles in Extent—its breadth about fifty feet in many places, and from 12 to 18 feet in depth from the top of the Rampart—the earth of the Excavation which is laid regularly on the inside of the ditch makes the Rampart 50 feet broad and about 6 or 10 feet above the level of the Country, and I found 3500 Cooleys then at work upon the excavation.

“ Along the circuit of this ground as far as I placed it there seemed to be about 7 or 800 feet of the excavation not yet commenced upon, and what appears not a little remarkable in

⁸¹ Beng. Pub. Cons., May 2, 1769.

⁸² Letter from Lieut. Col. Campbell, April, 27, 1769.

⁸³ The report was addressed to Mr. Cartier, as the Governor was during these days at Murshidabad in connection with the 'Punyaha.'

this work is that the most finished parts are those that are most distant from the Public Roads and consequently little exposed to the eye of a British Passenger.

" Their overseers differed exceedingly in their reports of the intention of this work though some of them were honest enough to call it an Entrenchment—for my part, Sir, I am perfectly of opinion it is capable of being made a good field work in a very few days, I mean those parts of it that are already carried up to the above specified dimensions, and there may be at present (as far as I can learn) two thirds of the whole circuit in that State.

" As to the precious pretext of its being a Drain to carry off the backwater of the country which inundates the Town of Chandernagore it can have little weight with Gentlemen of Common understanding who examine the work with attention.

" The French are not remarkable for cutting zig zag drains of 50 feet broad and 12 or 13 feet deep for the sake of carrying off as much backwater as might be contained in a straight line of one sixth of that capacity, neither do I imagine it is consistent with the last articles of Peace, that they should on any pretence whatsoever shut themselves up to the field in such a manner as to render their situation formidable, but you, Sir, and the Hon'ble Council are the best judges of this matter, and it only becomes my duty to render to the Board the earliest intelligence of a circumstance wherein the interest of the Hon'ble Company may be so deeply concerned."

The report of Lieut. Col. Campbell satisfied⁸⁴ the authorities that their suspicions were too well-grounded. They were convinced that the construction of the ditch and rampart amounted to an infraction of the 11th article of the last Treaty of peace. They accordingly decided to depute the Chief Engineer " in a public capacity " " to make the most minute inspection into the nature and condition " of the works, and wrote a strongly worded note to M. Chevalier, expressing their " deepest concern at your carrying on a ditch and rampart

⁸⁴ Beng. Pub. Cons., May 2, 1769:

round the town of Chandernagore more calculated for the purpose of defence than to serve as a drain as was represented in 1768."⁸⁵

Apprehending opposition⁸⁶ from the French to a public inspection of the ditch, the Governor ordered⁸⁷ Lieut.-Col. Grant to transfer certain battalions of sepoys for duty at the Presidency, and hold the rest of the troops at Monghyr "in readiness to march at a moment's warning"⁸⁸ against Chandernagore. Mr. Graham, Resident at Burdwan, was likewise directed to keep the companies under his charge in readiness to move at the shortest possible notice.⁸⁹ Lieut.-Col. Campbell, however, met with no opposition during his survey of the ditch, and the result of his extensive enquiries left no doubt as to the real purpose of the works. The authorities thereupon demanded that the ditch should be levelled up to allay all suspicions. The French not only did not care to comply with the requisition, but carried on the work "with all possible expedition."⁹⁰

A number of circumstances at this time combined to strengthen the growing belief⁹¹ that the French were preparing for a movement against the English settlements. A letter was received⁹² from the Directors in March, wherein the latter warned that the French were sending out large reinforcements to their islands and settlements in India. Intelligence had also

⁸⁵ Letter to the Governor and Council at Chandernagore, May, 2, 1769.

⁸⁶ Letter from Mr. W. Lushington, Assistant Secretary to the Council, to Mr. C. Floyer, Secretary to the Select Committee, May 12, 1769, " . . . military force may be required to enforce our just demands upon the Governor and Council at Chandernagore to give our Chief Engineer an opportunity of surveying the works."

⁸⁷ Letter to Lieut.-Col. H. Grant, Commanding the troops at Monghyr. The letter was written in May, but was embodied in the proceedings of the Select Committee, June 8, 1769.

⁸⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., May 13, 1769.

⁸⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., May 19, 1769.

⁹⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., June 8, 1769.

⁹¹ Suspicions had arisen even in 1768. *Vide* Letters to Court, September 13 and 26, 1768, and Beng. Sel. Com., July 20, 1768.

⁹² Beng. Sel. Com., March 21, 1769.

been received some time ago that the French were trying to obtain possession of the island of Negrais.⁹³ The Faujdar of Hooghly reported more than once that the French were secretly importing⁹⁴ arms, and manufacturing⁹⁵ gunpowder. It was further reported that thatched sheds were being erected⁹⁶ in the old fort at Chandernagore, which also indicated that the French were expecting a large force in Bengal. News⁹⁷ was also received that some French ships of war with troops on board had sailed from the Cape towards India. Finally, it was already notorious that the French were keeping more than the required number of sepoys at their various factories. For example, Mr. Vansittart, Chief of Midnapur, reported in March⁹⁸ that one M. Aussant had arrived at Mohanpore with a considerable force of armed sepoys in the capacity of Resident for the French Company.

The refusal of the French to destroy the works in dispute was naturally regarded as an added proof of their hostile intentions. The Select Committee came to the conclusion that the conduct of the French was such as clearly betrayed "a tendency to disturb the tranquillity"⁹⁹ of the country. They accordingly issued peremptory orders for the forcible demolition¹⁰⁰ of the works, and Lieut.-Col. Campbell was deputed with a body of sepoys to execute the same. Precautionary measures were at the same time taken to guard against a sudden outbreak of hostilities with the French. Lieut.-Col. Chapman was ordered¹⁰¹ to proceed with the whole of the Second

⁹³ Abs. I. 1766—71, Nos. 146-7.

⁹⁴ Trans. R. 1768, Nos. 278, 297, etc.

⁹⁵ Cop. R. 1769, No. 77.

⁹⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., June 8, 1769.

⁹⁷ Letter from Col. R. Smith, June 14, 1769.

⁹⁸ Bengal District Records, Midnapur, II, p. 139.

⁹⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., June 8, 1769.

¹⁰⁰ Letter to Court, September 30, 1769.

¹⁰¹ Letter to Lieut.-Col. C. Chapman, June 8, 1769.

Brigade to Berhampore, and Col. Smith was directed¹⁰² to send a company of Artillery along with the Second Brigade, and remove the Third Brigade¹⁰³ from Allahabad to Bankipore, or "divide them at that place and at Monghyr."¹⁰⁴ The First Brigade, it may be pointed out, had already been ordered down to the Presidency.¹⁰⁵ The Chief and Council at Cossimbazar were warned of the danger of a rupture with the French, and were advised to arrange accommodation for the Second Brigade in the new cantonments at Berhampore.¹⁰⁶ On the representation¹⁰⁷ of the authorities at Cossimbazar that the cantonments at Berhampore could not accommodate the whole of the Second Brigade, orders¹⁰⁸ were issued for the supply of tents, and for the erection of temporary bungalows to provide additional accommodation for the officers.

Agreeably to the orders of the authorities, Lieut.-Col. Campbell proceeded to Chandernagore early in June, and the Faujdar of Hooghly was ordered to supply "as many thousands of coolies" as the Chief Engineer might require to fill up the ditch.¹⁰⁹ The Faujdar having left¹¹⁰ for Murshidabad to attend the 'Punyaha,' his deputy failed to collect a sufficient number of coolies, whereupon he was severely rebuked by Mr. Cartier, and was asked "to persuade the coolies whom the French have collected to leave their service and come over to this side."¹¹¹ Despite all his efforts,¹¹² the Naib-Faujdar could not supply more than eighty coolies. The authorities were sc

102 Letter to Col. R. Smith, June 8, 1769.

103 Beng. Sel. Com., June 20, 1769.

104 Letter to Col. R. Smith, June 20, 1769.

105 Letters from Lieut.-Col. H. Grant, May 23 and 25, 1769.

106 Beng. Sel. Com., June 10, 1769.

107 Letter from the Chief and Council at Cossimbazar, June 19, 1769.

108 Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.

109 Cop. I. 1769, No. 18.

110 Cop. R. 1769A, No. 22.

111 Cop. I. 1769, No. 20.

112 Cop. R. 1769A, No. 25.

disgusted at his "negligence and incompetence" that they threatened¹¹³ him with "condign punishment," if the required number of coolies were not forthwith procured.

Meanwhile, orders were issued from Murshidabad for the transfer¹¹⁴ of Sayyid Muhammad Ali Khan, the former Faujdar of Hooghly, to Purneah, and a stronger¹¹⁵ man, Raziuddin Muhammad Khan, was appointed in his place expressly for expediting the levelling up of the ditch. In view of the reported scarcity¹¹⁶ of coolies in the Hooghly district, the new Faujdar brought a large number of coolies from Murshidabad itself.¹¹⁷ He too was, however, reproved for his negligence,¹¹⁸ although he appears to have collected more than 700 coolies.¹¹⁹ The work of filling up the ditch was further hampered by the frequent desertion of the coolies. For example, towards the end of July more than 600 coolies were reported to have deserted.¹²⁰ At last, the ditch was levelled up with the help of 800 sepoys.¹²¹

Such strong measures taken against the authorities of Chandernagore eventually provoked acrimonious complaints from the French Court to the Government of England, as a result of which, after Verelst's departure from India, a representative was appointed¹²² by the Crown to report on the differences between the servants of the two Companies in Bengal.

¹¹³ Cop. I. 1769, No. 21.

¹¹⁴ Cop. R. 1769A, No. 34.

¹¹⁵ *Muzaffar-Namah* (Alld. Univ. MS.), p. 444.

¹¹⁶ Cop. R. 1769, No. 31.

¹¹⁷ *Muzaffar-Namah* (Alld. Univ. Ms.), p. 444.

¹¹⁸ Cop. I. 1769, No. 30.

¹¹⁹ Trans. R. 1769, No. 75.

¹²⁰ Cop. R. 1769, No. 50.

The desertion was alleged to be due to "the severity of the Captains." (Trans. R. 1769, No. 95.)

¹²¹ Stavorinus: *Voyage to the East Indies*, I, pp. 529-30.

Muzaffar-Namah (Alld. Univ. MS.), p. 445. Letter to Court, September 30, 1769.

¹²² Letter from Court, June 27, 1770. Sir John Lindsay was the accredited agent on the part of the Crown.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEPORTATION OF WILLIAM BOLTS

Never in the annals of the East India Company's administration in India has any single individual been guilty of more persistent, or more insolent opposition to the government than William Bolts¹, a Dutch adventurer in the Company's service, who for about two years resolutely held his own against the Bengal authorities, and, when ultimately deported from this country, carried on a relentless vendetta against Verelst and the East India Company, and avenged himself on them in the first instance by successful litigation in England, and later by writing a scathing indictment of the English government in Bengal. The history of this man "whose whole continuance in Bengal" was, in the words of Verelst, "one scene of complaints, replies, reprimands, and contentions"² serves to illustrate the weakness betrayed by Verelst in maintaining the authority of the government, and as such deserves a fuller attention than it would otherwise have merited.

Even before Verelst became Governor of Fort William, Mr. Bolts had made himself thoroughly obnoxious³ to the authorities by his highhanded proceedings and shady transactions, and had in consequence incurred the displeasure of the Directors as well. In 1764 the Directors wrote 'a strong remonstrance against the irregular practices of Mr. Bolts, and warned the latter that if his conduct failed to be more satis-

¹ Born in Holland in 1735, he came to England about the year 1749. In 1759 he received his appointment as Factor in the Bengal establishment. He arrived in Bengal in 1760, and in the course of six years amassed a fortune of £90,000 by private trade. (*Vide* Bolts: *Considerations*:—Preface, p. xii.)

² Verelst's *View*, etc., p. 7.

³ Mr. Vansittart had strongly condemned Mr. Bolts's conduct more than once.

factory in future, he would be dismissed from the service.⁴ In their meeting of February 24, 1766, the Council, while considering the request⁵ of Mr. Bolts for permission to return to Benares in his former station as second in Council, expressed their disapprobation of his late conduct at Benares, and allowed him to return in a private capacity only to settle his affairs within the 1st of July next.⁶

At Benares Mr. Bolts stayed beyond the time prescribed by the Council, and was in consequence severely warned that, if he did not return to Calcutta by the 28th August, he would be dismissed from the service.⁷ A month later, the Council rejected the request of Mr. Bolts for further indulgence, and resolved that their orders should not be trifled with, and that the latter should be suspended from the Company's service with effect from the 28th of August.⁸ The Council, however, informed him that, if he returned to Calcutta by the 10th of October, his suspension would be taken off, but that if he did not leave Benares by the 1st of October, he was to be forcibly sent away by the Resident of the Factory. Mr. Bolts took no notice of the orders for his suspension, and in November submitted his resignation⁹ presumably to secure complete freedom for the prosecution of his lucrative private trade.

Mr. Bolts's resignation was duly accepted by the Council at their meeting of the 24th of November,¹⁰ 1766; but it is strange indeed that the Council had some time ago¹¹ elevated this very censured civilian to the office of Alderman of the Mayor's Court at Calcutta, an office which legally entitled him

⁴ Letter from Court, February 8, 1764.

⁵ Letter from Mr. William Bolts, January 31, 1766.

⁶ Beng. Pub. Cons., February 24, 1766.

⁷ Beng. Pub. Cons., July 28, 1766.

⁸ Beng. Pub. Cons., August 25, 1766.

⁹ Letter from Mr. William Bolts, November 10, 1766.

¹⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons., November 24, 1766.

¹¹ On the 11th of August, 1766.

Beng. Pub. Cons., August 11, 1766, and O. C., No. 1.

to reside in India for life.¹² Subsequently, the Directors could not help noticing this strange indiscretion, and they wrote¹³ about it thus, "It is indeed a matter of astonishment to us that Mr. Bolts who was under a sentence of suspension in August, 1766, should during that period be elevated into the office of Alderman by the President and Council, who only could chuse him, which office tho' it confers in him no authority or license to trade after actual resignation or dismissal, yet certainly it impowers him to reside in India and obliges him to perform the duty of his office for life, unless he should be guilty of some offence amounting to a just cause of dismissal or amotion from that office according to the Charter of Justice." The authorities had later to regret their imprudent generosity, when Mr. Bolts refused to leave the country at the bidding of the Governor and Council.

Notwithstanding his promise¹⁴ that he would go back to Europe after he had settled his private concerns, Mr. Bolts not only showed no inclination to relinquish his private trade, but actually continued to engage in new concerns in defiance of the orders of the Council. Accordingly, early in January, shortly before Clive's departure from India, the Council resolved¹⁵ that as Mr. Bolts could no longer claim any title to remain in India, he was not to engage in fresh commercial ventures, and that he should "prepare to embark for England in one of the Company's returning ships of the season."

Soon after Verelst's assumption of office, Mr. Bolts addressed a letter¹⁶ to the Governor and Select Committee asking for

¹² In accordance with the Charter of the 26th, George II, removable only "upon a complaint in writing first exhibited against him, and that he have a reasonable time given him to make his defence." (Vide Mr. Bolts's petition, May 19, 1769.)

¹³ Letter from Court, March 23, 1770.

¹⁴ Letter from Mr. William Bolts, November 10, 1766. (Beng. Pub. Cons., November 24, 1766.)

¹⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., January 5, 1767.

¹⁶ Letter from Mr. William Bolts, February 11, 1767.

Beng. Sel. Com., March 3, 1767.

their assistance in collecting his "very considerable outstanding balances."¹⁷ He urged, "I have, by sea and land, of my own and other people's, about eight lacks of rupees now out, and actually employed in lawful trade, which no way interferes with any part of the honourable Company's investment." He, however, assured them upon his honour that he had not lately entered into any new inland concerns, and that he would engage in none except such as he had already been some time engaged in for the purpose of collecting outstanding balances. In short, Mr. Bolts made out an extremely plausible case for further indulgence to him. As the authorities had no desire to injure him financially, they readily granted his request for assistance, and issued to him the desired 'Parvanahs' upon the zamindars, and directed the Court of Cutcherry to examine forthwith all his claims on the latter.¹⁸ As, however, the Select Committee found a few days later¹⁹ that the Court of Cutcherry could not with propriety take cognizance of the claims on zamindars who resided in parts where the authority of the aforesaid Court did not extend, they recommended that

17 " In the district of Purnea :—			Rs.	10,939.	13.	6
Goragaut Shah Gunge	...	...	...	6,029.	12.	6
Rungpore	...	...	...	1,777.	9.	6
Dinagepore	...	...	...	2,320.	10.	6
Shawpore Purg Santose, Krishndeeb, and Govindibaug	...	...	...	151.	9.	6
			<hr/>			
			Rs.	21,219.	7.	6

" The following are balances due from the Zemindars themselves of sundry districts much nearer at hand . . . :—

Due from the Zemindar of Jessore,

Nilcanto Roy	...	...	...	Rs.	13,029.	12.	0
" from Tumlook	...	...	...	"	2,501.	10.	6
" of Sujah-Mootah	...	...	...	"	10,938.	7	0
Fouzdar of Ragimaul	...	...	...	"	638.	4.	0
			<hr/>				
			Rs. 27,106.				

¹⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., March 3, 1767.

¹⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., March 10, 1767.

' Parvanahs ' should be granted by the Governor on the courts of those districts where the demands were made, and that the claims within the Company's jurisdiction should be examined and adjusted by the Collector-General.

In addition to the ' Parvanahs ' on the zamindars such as those of Jessore,²⁰ Verelst wrote letters on the 9th of March to Shujauddaulah²¹ and Raja Balvant Singh²² also, requesting them to allow Mr. Bolts's gumashtahs to collect without obstruction the outstanding balances due to that gentleman. It is interesting to note that the Vazir in his reply offered to apply himself " with redoubled diligence to the speedy collection of Mr. Bolts's concerns."²³ All this goes to show that the authorities were prepared to concede all possible assistance to Mr. Bolts.

Mr. Bolts, however, was in no hurry to wind up his business. On the contrary, he implicated himself in a despicable conspiracy²⁴ against Nobkissen at the instigation of Maharaja Nandkumar, and actively supported one Ramnath who falsely accused Nobkissen of having violated a Brahmin's wife. Nobkissen was later acquitted in the trial, but the authorities could not help taking a serious view of Mr. Bolts's undue interest in the infamous conspiracy against Nobkissen. The Select Committee in their meeting of the 18th of April²⁵ recorded their strong condemnation of the share Mr. Bolts " took in stirring up and instigating the prosecution " against Nobkissen, and resolved that " Mr. Bolts, having upon this and many other occasions endeavoured to draw an odium upon the administration and to promote faction and discontent in the settlement, has rendered himself unworthy of any further

²⁰ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 151.

²¹ Trans, I. 1766-67, No. 73.

²² Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 75.

²³ Trans. R. 1767-8, No. 207.

²⁴ Verelst's View, etc., p. 39.

Bolts, Considerations, etc., p. 95.

²⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., April 18, 1767.

indulgence from the Committee and of the Company's protection. That therefore he be directed to quit Bengal and to proceed to Madras by the first ship that shall sail for that presidency in the month of July next, in order to take his passage from thence to Europe in September."

As Mr. Bolts refused to take any notice of the aforesaid orders for his return to Europe, the Council urged²⁶ him once again in August to proceed positively by the *Lord Holland* that was to leave in the next month. In reply, Mr. Bolts wrote²⁷ to Mr. Simeon Droz, Secretary to the Council, sarcastically expressing his surprise at the frequent repetition of orders for his departure. He at the same time informed²⁸ the Council that he was unable to comply with their orders, unless he was fully indemnified by them for all the financial losses that he and his constituents should sustain by his immediate departure. He pointed out that he had so far realised only a lakh and a half out of eight lakhs of his own and other people's property entrusted to him, and added that he had still to collect another eight lakhs of property for which he was trustee. As a matter of fact, however, his agents were making²⁹ new purchases under the pretence of collecting outstanding balances.

In the meantime, as the authorities were informed of his "improper intercourse with the Dutch to the detriment of the honourable Company's affairs,"³⁰ they insisted on his immediate departure for Europe. Mr. Kelsall, Chief of the Factory at Dacca, had lately reported³¹ to the Governor all about the

²⁶ Beng. Pub. Cons., August 24, 1767.

²⁷ Letter from Mr. William Bolts to Mr. Simeon Droz, August 29, 1767.

Beng. Pub. Cons., October 1, 1767.

²⁸ Letter from Mr. William Bolts to the Governor and Council, August 29, 1767.

²⁹ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 146.

³⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons., October 1, 1767.

³¹ Letter from Mr. Kelsall to the Governor, September 18, 1767.

"private compact" of Messrs. Vernet and Bolts "relative to a clandestine trade at Dacca in prejudice to the commercial interests of the East India Company." Although authentic proofs of Mr. Bolts's secret engagement with the Dutch President could not be obtained, the Governor strongly suspected some kind of secret understanding between Mr. Bolts and the Dutch President at Chinsura. On the 1st of October,³² the Council therefore agreed that after the indulgence they had already granted to Mr. Bolts, his private concerns were no inducement for them to recede from their orders, and resolved that he should positively embark in the next available ship that sailed for Europe. Besides, in view of his alleged intrigue with the Dutch authorities of Chinsura, the Council further directed³³ him not to go out of Calcutta without their express permission. Instructions were forthwith issued to the Mayor's Court to apply for another Alderman in the place of Mr. Bolts.

Mr. Bolts thereupon reiterated³⁴ his vehement protest against the orders of the Council, and refused to leave the country, unless some satisfactory settlement was made in respect of his business affairs and the property entrusted to him by others. He also emphatically repudiated the charge relating to his alleged intrigue with the Dutch, and demanded to be confronted with his accusers.³⁵ In fairness to Mr. Bolts it is necessary to state here that the charge in respect of his attempt "to monopolize the cloth-trade of Dacca"³⁶ could not be proved even later on the basis of unimpeachable evidence.³⁷

³² Beng. Pub. Cons., October 1, 1767.

³³ Mr. Bolts went away to Chinsura in defiance of the Council's orders.

³⁴ Letter from Mr. William Bolts to the Governor and Council, October 9, 1767.

³⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., October 12, 1767.

³⁶ Verelst's View, etc., p. 41.

³⁷ Letter to Court, September 12, 1768 etc.

While asking for the removal of Mr. Bolts from his office of Alderman, the authorities seemed to have over-looked the legal formalities necessary for such removal. The office continued for life, and could be vacated only by voluntary departure, or by a motion for reasonable cause in the judicial manner prescribed by statute. The Council's orders for the suspension of Mr. Bolts from his office were therefore not legal, and were in consequence almost contemptuously ignored³⁸ by the Mayor's Court. The independent attitude taken up by the Mayor's Court was as surprising to the Governor and Council, as it was agreeable to Mr. Bolts.

Sanguine of the Court's continued support in future, Mr. Bolts wrote³⁹ to the Mayor expressing his complete satisfaction at his "just disregard" of "the glaring attempt to an infringement of the British liberties," and strongly inveighed against the personal animosity of the Governor in the following words, "Though the letter to your honourable Court appears under the sanction of the Governor and Council, I consider it only as the act of Governor Verelst alone, as I shall make it hereafter appear to the world. Consider in this light how deplorable would be our situation if, at the base desire of a Governor, or even a Governor and his Council, the express orders of the Charter should be set aside, and a free British subject exposed to be deprived of his honour and liberty. A malicious man, high in station, who boasts that he is beyond punishment, and that justice can not reach him, would have it always in his power to spread ruin into every family against which he had any aversion."⁴⁰

Meanwhile Mr. Bolts addressed a spirited protest to the Court of Directors too against "the groundless and reproachful

³⁸ Letter from Mr. John Holme, Register of the Mayor's Court, October 6, 1767. (O. C., October 12, No. 1.)

Beng. Pub. Cons., October 12, 1767.

³⁹ Letter from Mr. William Bolts to the Mayor and Aldermen of the Mayor's Court, Oct. 8, 1767.

Beng. Pub. Cons., November 5, 1767.

⁴⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons., November 5, 1767.

accusations " levelled against him by the Governor, and asserted in an accompanying letter⁴¹ to the Governor and Council that he had truth and facts on his side, and that he was ready " to brave the envenomed shafts of future oppression and injustice." In a separate letter⁴² to two members of the Council, Messrs Richard Becher and James Alexander, whom he sought to warn against " the artifices of many combined against him alone," he threatened that he should not be compelled in his own defence " to print and publish to the world at home, what may add to the national odium against the Company."

In reply to the invectives levelled by Mr. Bolts, Verelst submitted a strongly worded minute⁴³ to the Council at their meeting of the 5th of November, exposing in detail two of the numerous " misrepresentations and falsehoods " in Mr. Bolts's address to the Directors. Firstly, with regard to the confinement of Ramnath, Verelst asserted that he had positively forbidden any demands being made on account of the debt the latter owed him, until full restitution had been obtained for the sufferers from Ramnath's extortions at Malda, and declared upon honour that he had not yet received a single rupee from him. Secondly, with regard to the case of Gocul Sonar, Verelst repudiated Mr. Bolts's insinuation that he had any selfish motive in referring it for trial to the Court of Zemindary.

The Council carefully considered the letters from Mr. Bolts as well as the Governor's minute, and in the end unanimously expressed their full approbation of the President's conduct, and resolved⁴⁴ that their previous orders to Mr. Bolts for his return to Europe should be repeated, and " in case of disobedience to and contempt for our authority his person shall be seized, and forcibly sent home a prisoner in one of the ships of this

⁴¹ Letter from Mr. William Bolts to the Governor and Council, October 18, 1767.

⁴² Letter from Mr. William Bolts to Messrs Richard Becher and James Alexander, October 18, 1767.

⁴³ Beng. Pub. Cons., November 5, 1767.

⁴⁴ O. C., 5th November, 1767, No. 6 (a).

season " for " the preservation of peace, order, and tranquillity in this settlement, and throughout the honourable Company's possessions in Bengal." The impudent defiance of Mr. Bolts and his libellous attack on the Governor seem to have provoked the Governor and Council to such an extent that they passed this strong resolution in haste, regardless of the fact that it could not be legally enforced. In fact, they could not actually enforce it till after the lapse of about a year, and even then they could do so after considerable hesitation.

It was about this time that the authorities came to know about Mr. Bolts's secret intrigue in Oudh, which was indeed much more serious and daring than the latter's alleged conspiracy with the Dutch President at Chinsura. The evidence⁴⁵ which established his guilt in this matter was surely more substantial. Verelst informed⁴⁶ the Council in December that he had received reliable information about the secret correspondence carried on by Mr. Bolts with the Vazir, M. Gentil and many others, and that one such letter written by Mr. Bolts had been actually procured under his orders. Warned by Col. Smith about M. Gentil's undesirable influence⁴⁷ over the Vazir, and partly on account of his own suspicions of Mr. Bolts's secret intrigue with M. Gentil, the Governor had recently decided to take steps for removing the latter and his associates from the Court of the Vazir.⁴⁸ Col. Smith's⁴⁹ report was to the effect that the Vazir was in regular receipt of detailed and confidential information about the Company's affairs from Mr. Bolts who corresponded with M. Gentil and Mir Masha⁵⁰-Allah. Col. Smith forwarded a letter written by Mr. Bolts to M. Gentil, containing " an absolute falsehood." The letter

⁴⁵ Letter to Court, December 10, 1767. Verelst's View, etc., pp. 39-40. According to Verelst, the Vazir " began to listen to the voice of ambition," and took Mr. Bolts's agent, Coja Rafael, into his service.

⁴⁶ Beng. Pub. Cons., December 10, 1767.

⁴⁷ Letter from Col. R. Smith, October 23, 1767.

⁴⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., November 17, 1767.

⁴⁹ Second Report, 1772, pp. 270-1.

⁵⁰ Letter from Col. R. Smith, November 24, 1767.

Mr. Maddison tried in vain⁵¹ to recure the contents of the letter written by Mr. Bolts to the Vazir. He, however, managed to learn from the latter⁵² that the letter had originally been written by Mr. Bolts to Mir Maslin-Allah from whom the Vazir had got it. Mr. Maddison further reported that the Armenian 'gunashtahs' of Mr. Bolts were another secret channel of intrigue with and intelligence to the Vazir. They were, in the words of Mr. Maddison, perpetually filling the country and the Nabob's court with lying rumours. All this evidence convinced the Council of the urgent necessity of removing a mischievous intriguer, and they accordingly decided⁵³ to acquaint the Court of Directors with all the details of

⁵¹ Ben. Sel. Com., December 11, 1767.

⁵² Ben. Pub. Cons., December 10, 1767. Letter from Mr. William Bolts to M. Gentil, June 19, 1767. O. C., December 10, No. 1 (n).

⁵³ Letter from Mr. Maddison, November 26, 1767.

⁵⁴ The Vazir told Mr. Maddison, "No, no, he (i.e., Mr. Bolts) did not write it to me, he wrote it to Meer Mushallah, and I had it from him." Verelst's View, etc., p. 204.

⁵⁵ Letter to Court, December 10, 1767.

Mr. Bolts's activities with a view to impress upon them the expediency of enforcing their decision to send him away to Europe. Meanwhile the Governor and Select Committee desired⁵⁶ Col. Smith to use his endeavours with the Vazir to remove Mr. Bolts's 'gumashtahs' from Oudh.

It might appear unaccountable that for several months after this the authorities did nothing to enforce their standing resolution against Mr. Bolts. The latter's agents were, however, forced⁵⁷ to leave Oudh, and were seized and confined at Murshidabad under the orders of Muhammad Riza Khan. Although the manner in which their seizure was effected was rather highhanded, yet it must be said that the action taken against them was not wholly unjustified. Mr. Bolts had certainly been given more than sufficient time⁵⁸ to wind up his business, and had been repeatedly warned not to engage in new concerns. Regardless of these warnings, Mr. Bolts had not only not closed his business operations, but had sought to use his agents in Oudh as a means of establishing personal or political influence over the Vazir to the detriment of the interests of the Company. When Mr. Bolts protested⁵⁹ against the strong measures taken against his agents, the Governor rather disingenuously replied⁶⁰ that he knew of no orders for impeding the business of Mr. Bolts's agents in particular.⁶¹ As a matter of fact, however, Mr. Bolts's agents had been

⁵⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., December 22, 1767.

⁵⁷ Letter from Capt. Harper, March 20, 1768.

Letter from Capt. Harper, March 29, 1768.

⁵⁸ Letter from Mr. C. Floyer, Secretary to Mr. William Bolts, April 15, 1768.

Beng. Sel. Com., April 15, 1768.

Beng. Sel. Com. May 18, 1768.

⁵⁹ Letter from Mr. William Bolts, March 30, 1768.

Second Report, 1772, pp. 273-4.

⁶⁰ Letter to Mr. William Bolts, March 31, 1768.

Second Report, 1772, p. 275.

⁶¹ Subsequently Verelst admitted that he had named such persons as were known to him. (Letter to Mr. William Bolts, April 9, 1768.)

specifically named in Verelst's letters to Col. Smith and the Vazir. In February last, Verelst had earnestly requested the Vazir to apprehend two Armenian agents of Mr. Bolts, Coja Rafael and Coja Estevan, and send them down to Calcutta.⁶² It must be pointed out, however, that the Governor had recently issued general orders⁶³ prohibiting all trade carried on by the English 'gumashtahs' outside Bengal.

It is interesting to note that Verelst was so greatly annoyed at the unexpected leakage of his confidential instructions to the Vazir regarding the expulsion of Mr. Bolts's agents that he vehemently urged⁶⁴ the Vazir to punish those traitors who had disclosed his secret correspondence to Mr. Bolts. The Vazir protested his innocence,⁶⁵ and offered to punish Mir Masha-Allah in case the latter's guilt was proved. Mir Masha-Allah also gave a written obligation to the effect that "if any letter under his seal appeared concerning the aforesaid matter, His Excellency might destroy him and his family."⁶⁶ Having failed to detect the source of leakage, the Governor asked the Select Committee⁶⁷ at their meeting of the 15th of April to record Mr. Bolts's own admission⁶⁸ of the fact that he was in correspondence with the Indian Princes and others. Verelst naturally believed that by writing independently to the Vazir and other Princes, Mr. Bolts had unlawfully arrogated to himself what was an established privilege of the Governor alone.⁶⁹

⁶² Abs. I. 1766-71, Nos. 22-23.

⁶³ Beng. Sel. Com., April 27, 1768.

Beng. Sel. Com., April 18, 1768.

⁶⁴ Abs. I. 1766-71, to. 37.

⁶⁵ Trans. R. 1767-68, Nos. 113A, and 161.

⁶⁶ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 162.

⁶⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., April 15, 1768.

⁶⁸ Letter from Mr. William Bolts, April 2, 1768.

⁶⁹ Verelst's View, etc., p. 39.

On the 18th of April,⁷⁰ the Council reaffirmed its previous resolution to send Mr. Bolts home by the next available ship, and declined to take any notice of his representations. The Council concluded that "from a series of misconduct and bad behaviour" Mr. Bolts had made himself unworthy of all title to the Company's protection. They further refused to interfere or interest themselves any more in his business affairs. While the authorities were certainly justified in taking this attitude, they were undoubtedly in the wrong when they allowed Mr. Bolts's agents to be unduly harassed and maltreated⁷¹ by the Nawab's officials, regardless of the strong protestations of Mr. Bolts and the humble petitions of the friends and relations of the agents themselves.⁷² Mr. Bolts had applied for their release soon after their arrest, but the Select Committee refused⁷³ to grant him any assistance. The Council too similarly refused to interfere in this matter, and early in May once again repeated their resolution⁷⁴ against Mr. Bolts.

Shortly afterwards, Mr. Bolts took the bold step of applying⁷⁵ for the protection of the General Court of Justice at Calcutta, and accordingly preferred⁷⁶ his formal complaint against the authorities to the Grand Jury. The Governor and Council again put themselves in the wrong when, sitting⁷⁷ as Justices of the Peace, they sought to quash the whole proceedings, and refused to hear the evidence of Mr. Bolts's

⁷⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons. April 18, 1768. O. C., No. 3, April 18.

⁷¹ They were kept in confinement for several months without trial. *Vide* their Petition to the Directors, September 12, 1769, in *Second Report*, 1772, pp. 281-2, and *Bolts: Considerations*, pp. 107-110.

⁷² Letter from Mr. William Bolts, April 18, 1768. (O. C., No. 3). In this letter Mr. Bolts threatened, "I am not to be trifled with."

On the 15th May certain relations of "Cojee Gregore and Cojee Melcomb" sent an address to the Council informing them of the distress of the latter.

⁷³ Beng. Sel. Com., April 15, 1768.

⁷⁴ Beng. Pub. Cons. May 4, 1768.

⁷⁵ Mr. Bolts's petition to Court, May 19, 1769.

⁷⁶ O. C. 30th May, 1768, No. 2 Beng. Pub. Cons., May 30, 1768.

⁷⁷ On the 27th May 1768.

witnesses,⁷⁸ although the Jury⁷⁹ insisted on hearing the latter. Their objection that the witnesses had not been regularly summoned was merely technical, and they needlessly rebuked the Jury for having aimed at assuming a power superior to the Government. In reply, the Jury presented a dignified protest against this attitude of the Judges, and also repudiated the unmerited charge levelled against themselves. The authorities thus tactlessly laid themselves open to the suspicion that they had wilfully conspired⁸⁰ against Mr. Bolts out of personal motives alone.⁸¹

In August Muhammad Riza Khan reported⁸² to the Governor how Mr. Bolts had unlawfully issued a public proclamation⁸³ "in the manner of a Firman"⁸⁴ and "in the style of a sovereign"⁸⁵ that whosoever imprisoned or molested his Armenian agent, Coja Rafael, would be answerable for all his balances and outstanding concerns. The language of the proclamation was so arrogant that Muhammad Riza Khan could not help protesting against it on the ground that as the Armenian agent of Mr. Bolts was confined at Murshidabad the proclamation was "directly levelled at the Nawab and the executive officers of the government." Muhammad Riza Khan

⁷⁸ The witnesses were the Sheriff, the Clerk of the Peace, and Messrs Dumbleton and Bird.

⁷⁹ The Jury consisted of twelve gentlemen, mostly servants of the Company.

⁸⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons. August 15, 1768.

⁸¹ Mr. Bolts ascribed the action of the judges to "jealousy and competition in trade." (O. C., August 15, 1768, No. 3 (a).)

⁸² Beng. Pub. Cons., August 15, 1768.

⁸³ Verelst's View, etc., p. 41.

⁸⁴ Letter from Muhammad Riza Khan. (O. C., 15th August, 1768, No. 2 A.)

⁸⁵ The proclamation which was under Mr. Bolts's hand and seal contained the following warning, "whoever, therefore, shall, without cause or pretence, impede and hinder this business, or any way molest the aforesaid person, he shall become responsible for my balances and outstanding concerns, and I will take due account of my affairs with him."

pointed out, "There never was an instance yet of any one who wrote in such a style to the Nizam and the officers of the government."

The authorities were now on the look out for a more serious charge against Mr. Bolts so that they might start legal proceedings against him. This is why the Governor brought to the notice⁸⁶ of the Council what he had heard from Mr. Edward Baber⁸⁷ that instead of personally executing the covenant sent by the Company, prohibiting the acceptance of presents by their servants, Mr. Bolts had, in order to evade the Company's orders, employed a writer to sign his name for him.⁸⁸

The Council called upon Mr. Baber to give his information on this point. The latter deposed as follows:—"When I was sub-secretary, Mr. Bolts came⁸⁹ to me at the secretary's office in the Council house, and after telling me he had something of importance to say to me, he took me aside, and asked me, if I could let him see his covenants sent out by the Company, prohibiting their servants accepting presents; to which I replied I could. He then desired me to go to a room where there were not any gentlemen writing; I took him into the Council room, and after shewing him his covenants, he requested me, in the most earnest manner, to execute them afresh, alleging, as a reason for making this request, that the signing was not his own but his writer's; and this circumstance was known to Mr. Sage, who he was apprehensive would make it public. I told him it was not in my power to grant him such a request, and peremptorily refused him; after this denial he then requested I would keep this matter a profound secret; I told him as long as I could do it consistently with my duty to my employers I would; but if it should ever be of

⁸⁶ Beng. Pub. Cons., August 26, 1768.

⁸⁷ O. C. 26th August, 1768, No. 12.

⁸⁸ O. C., 26th August, 1768, No. 4 (a.)

⁸⁹ "In or about September, 1766." (O. C., 5th September, 1768, No. 6.)

consequence to disclose this matter I must look upon this promise to be void."

As the Governor and Council were satisfied of the fact that Mr. Bolts had deliberately defrauded the Company by making his writer to sign his covenant for himself, summons was ordered to be issued to Mr. Bolts, asking him to appear before the Council on the 5th of September to answer to the charge.

The climax of the long drawn out quarrel between Mr. Bolts and the Government was now reached. On the 5th of September⁰⁰ the Council received an audacious reply⁰¹ from Mr. Bolts to the effect that, as the Governor had in this single instance "desisted from his custom of stabbing in the dark," and had "for once dared to stand forth", he would duly attend at the appointed hour "to fix the infamy where only it ought to fall."

After Mr. Baber's deposition⁰² had been formally read upon oath, Mr. Bolts was asked to appear before the Council. Mr. Bolts unexpectedly announced that unless his main accuser, the Governor, personally appeared before him, he would not answer to any questions. Unable to dispute the propriety of the demand, the Council sent their Secretary to call in the Governor. The latter curiously enough declined to attend on the plea that his accusation was based not on personal knowledge of facts but on an information he had received from Mr. Baber. Apparently, Verelst felt some delicacy in appearing as an informer before a body of which he was the President. This is why he insisted⁰³ on his presence being dispensed with, when the Council once again requested his attendance. The Council thereupon respectfully reminded⁰⁴ the Governor that every British subject had an

⁰⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons., September 5., 1768.

⁰¹ O. C., No. 1, September 5, 1768.

⁰² O. C., No. 6, September 5, 1768.

⁰³ O. C., No. 2, September 5, 1768.

⁰⁴ O. C., No. 3, September 5, 1768.

indubitable right to have his accuser before him. In reply Verelst asked for an adjournment of the meeting until the afternoon. Mr. Bolts was accordingly directed to attend between four and five in the afternoon.

The Council met at half past four, but Mr. Bolts did not appear till after half past five. Verelst's⁹⁵ information was then read along with Mr. Irwin's attestation⁹⁶ that he had duly served the summons on Mr. Bolts. Then followed Mr. Baber's deposition⁹⁷ regarding Mr. Bolts's request for a re-execution of his covenant. After this Mr. Bolts replied that the accusation was only partly true, and that Mr. Baber had wilfully omitted the most material circumstances, and had misrepresented many others. He then asked for permission to read out his defence. It is surprising to find that Verelst again betrayed his impatience, and refused to be present while Mr. Bolts read his defence. The Council had to give him permission to retire. There remains no doubt about the fact that Verelst was afraid of cross-examination at the hands of Mr. Bolts. After Verelst had left, Mr. Bolts instantly refused to deliver or read his defence in the absence of the Governor, and declared his intention to transmit it direct to the Court of Directors. He was eventually asked to retire.

Although Mr. Bolts's defence could not be heard at all owing to the unaccountable retirement of the Governor himself, the Council concluded in unseemly haste⁹⁸ that as Mr. Bolts had at least partly acknowledged the charge, he was in consequence an improper person to be a member of a Court of Justice. They wrote⁹⁹ forthwith to the Mayor's Court informing them of their decision to remove Mr. Bolts from his office of Alderman.

⁹⁵ O. C., No. 4, September 5, 1768.

⁹⁶ O. C., No. 5, September 5, 1768.

⁹⁷ O. C., No. 6, September 5, 1768.

⁹⁸ Mr. Bolts referred to it as "the hugger-mugger method pursued in the enquiry with shut doors."

⁹⁹ O. C., No. 7, September 5, 1768.

On an examination of the above proceedings of the Council it would be apparent that the orders for Mr. Bolts's removal from his office of Alderman were not legally valid. They were correctly reversed later by the Privy Council in England.¹⁰⁰ It is true that the offence with which he had been charged was serious¹⁰¹ enough to justify legal proceedings against him, but it must be admitted that the offence was neither correctly defined, nor properly established. Besides, it is strange that although the alleged offence had been committed in September 1766, no notice was taken of it till the end of August, 1768. The orders of expulsion had been passed in 1767 without any reference to this offence. Again, formal notice of the charge was given to Mr. Bolts after the Council meeting of the 26th of August; thus sufficient time was denied to him to prepare his defence. The persistent refusal of the Governor to face him during the trial, or to stand a cross-examination at his hands was again improper, if not strictly illegal. The summons issued by the Council was clearly defective, as it did not require Mr. Bolts to show cause why he should not be removed from the office of Alderman. Mention may also be made here of the material difference between the first information and the subsequent evidence of Mr. Baber. According to the first information,¹⁰² Mr. Bolts was alleged to have asked for a re-execution of his covenant. In his final deposition¹⁰³ Mr. Baber made a more serious allegation that Mr. Bolts had endeavoured to secure a re-delivery of the deed into his own custody.¹⁰⁴ It is a question

100 Letter from Court, June 27, 1770.

101 The Directors thought that the fact that he had employed his writer to sign his covenant did not necessarily indicate a criminal intention, as the signature of Mr. Bolts's writer was after all as valid in law as his own. His action might even be construed as "an idle but innocent one, to evade a rash oath which he had sworn that he would never sign them". (Letter from Court, May 23, 1770.)

102 Beng. Pub. Cons., August 26, 1768.

103 Beng. Pub. Cons., September 5, 1768.

104 " . . . the said William Bolts requested him . . . in the most earnest manner to permit him . . . to execute that deed afresh, or over again, and to allow him . . . to take the deed home . . . "

again as to how far Mr. Baber's own statement could be relied upon, particularly because it is known that he had reason to be prejudiced¹⁰⁵ against Mr. Bolts in view of his own recent prosecution by the latter in the Mayor's Court. The Directors actually remonstrated later that the information against Mr. Bolts had been "not so much by way of original complaint seemingly as by way of recrimination to retaliate for his presentment to the Grand Jury and his several protests and prosecution of Baber and Broughton, the Clerk of the Peace and Secretary of the Select Committee."¹⁰⁶

Mr. Bolts was, however, still undaunted. He replied with his usual defiance of the Council's orders, and sent a long petition with necessary affidavits and papers for transmission to the Court of Directors. In the course of the petition he bitterly attacked the conduct of the authorities in general, and of the Governor in particular.¹⁰⁷ To the members of the Council he threatened¹⁰⁸ solemnly that he would make them "answerable for the severest damages."

In reply to the libellous attack on himself, Verelst urged that every assertion made by Mr. Bolts which tended to reflect on his character was "infamously scandalous and false", and that he would submit¹⁰⁹ later a detailed reply to Mr. Bolts's accusation. The Governor and Council were now determined¹¹⁰ to get rid finally of Mr. Bolts. On the 13th of September, they at last decided¹¹¹ to send the latter home a

¹⁰⁵ Mr. Bolts argued with a show of reason, "Mr. Baber is not a competent judge having been instigated to propagate falsities solely from his having commenced a prosecution against him in the Mayor's Court."

¹⁰⁶ Letter from Court, May 23, 1770.

¹⁰⁷ Beng. Pub. Cons., September 13, 1768.

¹⁰⁸ O. C., 13th September, 1768, No. 2.

¹⁰⁹ Letter to Court, September 13, 1768.

¹¹⁰ O. C., 13th September, 1768, No. 1 (a.)

¹¹¹ Beng. Pub. Cons. September 13, 1768.

prisoner on board the *Valentine*, and issued on behalf of the Company¹¹² a proper bond¹¹³ of indemnification for the satisfaction¹¹⁴ of Captain Purvis.¹¹⁵

As the Council had good reason to believe¹¹⁶ that Mr. Bolts was not likely to comply with their orders voluntarily they ordered Captain Robert Coxe, a military officer, to seize him forcibly, if necessary, and conduct him to the schooner *Cuddalore* for being embarked later on board the *Valentine*. On the 23rd of September, Captain Coxe proceeded with a guard of sepoy to Mr. Bolts's residence, and as Mr. Bolts refused to stir out unless he was made a prisoner and forced, he called two sepoy "who put their hands on his shoulder by his own desire,"¹¹⁷ and conducted him under a guard on board the schooner which had been prepared to receive him and his necessaries. His wife followed him later.¹¹⁸ According to Captain Coxe's report,¹¹⁹ Mr. Bolts was actually well prepared to leave the place. He asked the sepoy to place

¹¹² Letter to Court, September 19, 1768.

¹¹³ Beng. Pub. Cons., September 19, 1768. (*Vide* O. C., No. 2.) The bond was for £50,000.

¹¹⁴ On being threatened with legal proceedings by Mr. Bolts, Captain Purvis had refused to take him on board without a bond of indemnification from the Council.

¹¹⁵ As the ship had been detained under the Council's orders, Captain Purvis had actually made a formal protest against this detention. (O. C., 28th September, No. 6. Beng. Pub. Cons., September 28, 1768.)

¹¹⁶ Beng. Pub. Cons., September 19, 1768.

Letter to Court, September 24, 1768. It was feared that Mr. Bolts "intended to procure himself to be arrested for debt."

¹¹⁷ Letter from Captain Coxe, September 23, 1768.

¹¹⁸ Mr. N. L. Hallward in his life of Mr. William Bolts betrays his ignorance of facts when he says (p. 41), "Whether she returned to her husband (after her elopement) before he left Bengal must be a matter of conjecture." Actually, however, we find Mr. Bolts stating clearly in the course of his examination that he was arrested by Captain Coxe while he had gone to his wife's room to see if she had sent her things away. He himself said, "My wife followed me afterwards." (*Vide* Second Report, 1772, p. 286.)

¹¹⁹ Letter from Captain Coxe, *op. cit.* Letter to Court, September 24, 1768.

their hands on his person only to show it to a few witnesses that he had been forced out of his house.¹²⁰ This evidence he evidently needed to substantiate his suit for damages against the authorities.

Even a superficial analysis of the various charges levelled against Mr. Bolts would show that the sentence of deportation inflicted on him after considerable delay and hesitation was neither unmerited, nor excessive. Though severely censured more than once by the local authorities as well as the Court of Directors, he had studiously and insolently ignored their repeated warnings, and had made himself an unendurable nuisance by his attitude of open defiance. He had not only grossly abused the indulgence generously granted to him by the authorities, but had been guilty of offences which no government could normally tolerate. Verelst's own defence of Mr. Bolts's deportation is sufficiently strong, and deserves to be quoted here. "It was criminal for a moment to suffer the residence of a man who, independent of other demerits, had corresponded with every rival, and every enemy of the Company; who had engaged with Mr. Vernet, the Dutch governor, to monopolize the cloth-trade of Dacca; who had scandalously evaded the execution of covenants which, as a servant of the Company, he was bound to subscribe; who had attempted one¹²¹ and actually succeeded in seducing another¹²² inferior servant to betray his trust, in delivering papers out of the office; who had, from his first arrival in India, carried on a trade destructive to the peace of the country; who, in support of this trade, had threatened the officers of the Nabob, and had issued his proclamation in the style of a sovereign; whose

¹²⁰ Captain Coxe was afterwards summoned to give evidence in the suit instituted by Mr. Bolts.

¹²¹ Mr. Edward Baber.

¹²² Mr. Fenwick who had supplied a copy of a minute of Colonel Smith to Mr. Bolts was dismissed from the service, though he was later reinstated under orders of the Directors in consideration of his youth. (O. C., 30th May, 1768, No. 3.)

Letter to Court, September 13, 1768.

agents, by their intrigues in the dominions of Sujah al Dowlah, and by false intelligence received from their master, had endangered the peace of India. To suffer such a man in Bengal was surely criminal."¹²³

That the authorities had reasonable grounds of dissatisfaction with the conduct and attitude of Mr. Bolts is undeniable, but it must be admitted that the Governor and Council betrayed a lamentable lack of caution and foresight in their whole proceedings against the latter. They weakly hesitated to take any action for a considerable time.¹²⁴ although they could have done so on the ground that as Alderman of the Mayor's Court Mr. Bolts had no title to engage in private inland trade. When they resolved at last to proceed to extremities, they took steps which were neither regular, nor judicious. Their conduct as judges was not above board, and the final prosecution of Mr. Bolts on the basis of the uncorroborated information of Mr. Baber was both irregular and short-sighted. The orders for his removal from the office of Alderman were hasty and illegal. It is also surprising to find that no fresh notice for his departure was given after his dismissal from his office, as was of course necessary. The final orders for his arrest were again equally precipitate, for the time intervening between the Council meeting of the 5th September and the day of his arrest was doubtless too short.

While it may be conceded that Verelst was not actuated by any personal malice or jealousy, as was unjustly insinuated by Mr. Bolts, one is constrained to feel that, as Governor, he did not act with due circumspection and firmness in his measures against Mr. Bolts. He had to pay heavily for his imprudence, as the latter subsequently ruined him by successful litigation in England.

¹²³ Verelst's View, etc., p. 41.

¹²⁴ The delay was probably due to their doubts regarding the legality of the forcible deportation of an ex-civil servant. They were also not sure whether the Directors would approve of their action. The approval of the Directors (Letter from Court, November 11, 1768) was received after the deportation had been effected.

CHAPTER IX

VERELST'S DISPUTES WITH COL. SMITH

The principle of complete subordination of the military to the civil authorities had been established during the administration of Clive, but a strict enforcement of this principle in Verelst's time gave rise to serious altercations between the Governor and the Commander of the Company's forces, which incidentally serve to illustrate a transitional stage in the history of the early administrative system of the English in Bengal.

It is noteworthy that the Directors themselves had unequivocally emphasized the necessity of civil control over the military department, and had vested the supreme power in their President and Council at Fort William. For example, they wrote¹ to the latter in 1764, "We need only remind you that all our officers and others in the Military Department are, as they ought, and were always intended to be, according to the Constitution of the Company, subordinate to and under the direction of the Civil Power of the President and Council, and we direct that this Fundamental Right be accordingly kept up and maintained in a proper manner." Again, in a general letter to the President and Council of Fort St. George they reiterated² this principle more emphatically, "The civil power in all our settlements shall be superior to, and command the military". The civil authorities, it may be added, had also the right to delegate³ their authority to any official they thought fit, and every military officer, irrespective of his rank, was bound to pay the same obedience to the latter's orders as to those of the President and Council.⁴

¹ Letter from Court, June 1, 1764.

² Letter from Court, February 19, 1766.

³ Letter from Court, December 24, 1765, " . . . you may delegate your authority to any Civil servant you please, and that the highest officer in the Army must obey that Civil Servant . . . "

Letter from Court, May 17, 1766.

In his farewell letter to the members of the Select Committee, Clive had thus warned⁵ them against the dangers⁶ from insubordination on the part of the military officers, "If you abate your authority over them, inconvenience and uneasiness to yourselves may not be the only consequences. Experience has convinced us that the army ought to be kept under the strictest subjection. I am not an advocate for arbitrary power; I am not desirous of exploding military law, but the civil power and authority of this Government must be graciously asserted, and notwithstanding the confidence that on the most emergent occasions may justly be reposed in the field officers, I would have it remembered that the immediate power is vested in yourselves to dismiss⁷ any officer, let his rank be what it will, without waiting for the sentence of a court-martial."

Verelst appears to have determined from the moment he took over charge of the Government to follow strictly the advice of his predecessor in the matter of exercising his right of control over the military authorities. In the very first minute which he submitted⁸ to the Select Committee after assuming office, he stressed the need of maintaining a vigorous control over the army in the following words, "Discipline and a strict observance of orders must be maintained throughout the army. We must consider that upon these rests our whole dependence. If we once neglect them, we fall an easy prey to our enemies. The army, instead of being under our command, will become our masters, and inevitable ruin must ensue. The flame of mutiny and disobedience, which lately blazed with so much violence, and which was with the greatest difficulty got under, is not yet totally extinguished. A few

⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., January 16, 1767.

⁶ Clive himself had always enforced "a total subjection of the army to the government." *Vide* Third Report, 1773, p. 395.

⁷ Letter from Court, December 24, 1765.

⁸ Minute of the Governor, February 5, 1767.

sparks still remain; and it demands our utmost care to destroy them whenever they appear."

The promptness with which the Governor and Select Committee dismissed⁹ Lieut. Butler from the service on the ground of his disobedience¹⁰ to the orders of the Chief of Cossimbazar shows that they would not tolerate the least contempt of the civil authority¹¹ on the part of any military officer. Late in January the Chief and Council of Cossimbazar brought to the notice of the Governor that Lieut. Butler had not only refused to obey their orders, but had insulted them in the most insolent manner.¹² They represented, "If you suffer the orders of your Chief or Council who are your immediate representatives to be contemned and their authority disputed . . . they will lose all influence and respect, and will not be able to conduct the affairs entrusted to their management properly either to yours or their own satisfaction." The behaviour of Lieut. Butler appeared to be "so unjustifiable," and the style of his letter to the Chief of Cossimbazar "so insolent and unbecoming," that the Governor determined that "he should be made an example of", and directed the authorities at Cossimbazar to send him forthwith under a proper guard to Calcutta.¹³ At the instance of the Governor,¹⁴ the Select Committee resolved on the 5th of February, 1767, "to dismiss him the service that others may be deterred from the like behaviour in future."¹⁵

⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., February 5, 1767.

¹⁰ Letter from Mr. G. Williamson, acting Chief of Cossimbazar, to Lieut. J. Butler, January 27, 1767. Letters from Lieut. J. Butler to Mr. G. Williamson, January 28 and 29, 1767. Letters from Lieut. J. Butler to Mr. G. Williamson, January 29 and 30, 1767.

¹¹ Letter to Court, February 19, 1767.

¹² Letter to the Chief and Council at Cossimbazar, January 30, 1767.

¹³ Letter to the Chief at Cossimbazar, January 31, 1767.

¹⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., February 5, 1767.

¹⁵ Minute of the Governor, February 5, 1767.

The disputes between the Governor and Col. Smith¹⁶ were, however, a much more serious and prolonged affair, and were occasioned in each case by the Governor's extreme anxiety to uphold the principle of the subordination of the military to the civil authority.

The first disagreement arose over the settlement of the sum payable by the Emperor and the Vazir for the extra expenses of the Third Brigade stationed at Allahabad at their requisition. The troops had not yet received the 'bhattach', or any other allowance exclusive of the monthly payment, hence the Governor repeatedly urged¹⁷ the Emperor and the Vazir to settle such extra allowances as were stipulated by treaty. At last, in May, 1767, Col. Smith made on his own authority an agreement¹⁸ with the Emperor and the Vazir, whereby they were to pay a consolidated sum of Rs. 30,000 per month on account of the extra expenses of the Third Brigade. The Governor and Select Committee took strong exception to this unauthorised agreement, and reprimanded¹⁹ Col. Smith for having settled "a point of such consequence to our Hon'ble constituents" "without express authority from this Committee". They considered the agreement to be premature,²⁰ and complained that the full accounts of the Second and Third Brigade had not been sent to them prior to "the conclusion of a treaty of so much consequence to the Company's interest." On the 21st of July,²¹ they resolved to write another letter to Col. Smith, desiring him "to demand the

¹⁶ According to M. Gentil, Col. Smith's character was as fiery as it was umbrageous (aussi bouillant qu'ombrageux). *Vide* his *Memoirs*, p. 271. Another contemporary writer, Mr. G. F. Grand, also refers to Col. Smith's insolent nature, and says that he was "an object of ridicule" on account of his failings. *Vide* his *Narrative* (Edited by Firminger), p. 24.

¹⁷ Cop. I, 1766-67, No. 79.

Cop. I, 1766-67, No. 80.

¹⁸ Letter from Col. R. Smith, May 23, 1767.

¹⁹ Letter to Col. R. Smith, July 6, 1767.

²⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., July 6, 1767.

²¹ Beng. Sel. Com., July 21, 1767.

difference²² between the sum stipulated and the actual charges "incurred on account of the Third Brigade, and "to settle it with the King and Nabob that in future the extra monthly charges whatever they may arise shall be paid."²³

Col. Smith did not take the rebuke of the Governor and Select Committee in good part, and protested against "the extraordinary marks of distrust" indicated in their letters, observing at the same time, "I have received reproof, when I expected commendation. Confidence begets confidence. Jealousies and suspicions only serve to render conciliation impracticable."²⁴ The Governor and Select Committee, however considered²⁵ it indispensably necessary to maintain not only the authority of the whole Board, but the dependence on each other of the individual members who composed the Committee inviolate, and were of the opinion that Col. Smith could not complain with justice "that he has met with reproof when he expected commendation," for, in the first place, he had asserted "a separate, a distinct and a seemingly independent power," in the second place, he had exercised on his own initiative "an authority which belongs to the whole Committee," in the third place, while appointing a Select Committee in Bengal, the Directors had expressly declared²⁶ that after Lord Clive's departure no succeeding commander of the forces should conduct negotiations or conclude treaties, but that such matters should be the concern exclusively of the civil authorities, and in the last place, the sum of Rs. 30,000 per month, for which he had hastily stipulated, was "considerably deficient of the actual charges incurred."

²² The difference was estimated at Rs. 258,862-5-6 for seven months and fifteen days.

²³ Letter to Col. R. Smith, July 21, 1767.

²⁴ Letter from Col. R. Smith, July 25, 1767.

²⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., August 18, 1767.

²⁶ Letter from Court, December 24, 1765. An exception had been made in the case of Clive, as the Directors had "the utmost confidence in him both in his Civil and Military Capacity."

The arguments which Col. Smith later put forward²⁷ in defence of his own conduct may now be summed up.²⁸ Col. Smith urged, firstly, that he could not conceive the present Select Committee "would be displeased at what a former Board²⁹ had approved," secondly, that "to pay an unequal, indeterminate sum could not be agreeable" to the Emperor and the Vazir, for they would not know what the actual charges would amount to in each month, thirdly, that the sum of thirty thousand rupees had appeared, according to his judgment, to be "adequate to every possible charge," fourthly, that by settling the sum he could not be said to have made a treaty, fifthly, that, being the Commander of the forces and a member of the Select Committee posted at "a distance of seven hundred miles from the Presidency," he did not imagine that he needed any special authority to enforce an article of the treaty made by Messrs Clive and Carnac, lastly, that he could not conceive that in adjusting military expenses he had asserted authority in matters foreign to his "particular station."

Col. Smith's arguments were, however, hardly convincing. He had neither been authorised by the Select Committee to make an agreement in his own discretion, nor could he prove his assertion that the stipulated sum was adequate for the extra expenses of the troops. Besides, as Commander of the Forces, he had no right to decide financial matters, and as a member³⁰ of the Select Committee too he should have awaited its sanction before finally making the aforesaid agreement.

²⁷ Letter from Col. R. Smith, September 16, 1767.

²⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., October 3, 1767.

²⁹ Letter to Col. R. Smith, August 18, 1766, intimating approval of the stipulation made with the Emperor for defraying the extra charges of the forces under the Colonel.

³⁰ He had been appointed as a member of the Select Committee on the recommendation of Clive as a special favour. The Directors were against allowing military officers to be members of the Council or the Select Committee. They wrote in 1766, ". . . upon Colonel Smith's coming away or decease, no other Military Officer is to succeed him in the Council . . ." (*Vide* Letter from Court, May 17, 1766.)

Furthermore, the Committee's approval of a particular stipulation in 1766 could not by any stretch of imagination be construed as a standing authority for all future negotiations in this matter.

The next dispute with Col. Smith arose over a comparatively minor matter. A number of officers had applied for promotion, but Col. Smith forwarded to the Select Committee the applications of only those few officers whose claims he considered to be sufficiently well-grounded.³¹ The authorities, however, took him to task³² for not having forwarded all the applications he had received. In their strongly worded letter³³ to him, they demanded that all the memorials presented to him should be forwarded, for, as they pointed out, "It is not impossible that our sentiments may differ upon this subject, and we would choose to think for ourselves on a point so interesting to the happiness of the army and the honour of the Board."

When Col. Smith again protested³⁴ against their seeming want of confidence in him, the Governor and Select Committee explained to him in reply³⁵ that when they had asked him to transmit all the memorials from the officers, they had entertained no suspicion that any might have been "suppressed from partial considerations," but that they had thought that their "sentiments might be different on the merit of the claims." This was, however, not the real reason why they had asked for all the applications, for after all Col. Smith, being the Commander of the forces, was likely to be a better judge of the claims of the military officers than the civilian members of the Select Committee could have been. The annoyance of the Governor was mainly due to the fact that by selecting a few applications on his own authority, Col. Smith had arrogated to

³¹ Letter from Col. R. Smith, May 17, 1767.

³² Beng. Sel. Com., July 6, 1767.

³³ Letter to Col. R. Smith, July 6, 1767.

³⁴ Letter from Col. R. Smith, August 18, 1767.

³⁵ Letter to Col. R. Smith, August 18, 1767.

himself what was known to be a prerogative of the Select Committee as a whole. In the letter, enclosing the aforesaid applications, Col. Smith had stated, "I have selected such whose pretensions appear to me well grounded."³⁹ It is these words which appear to have offended the Governor and Select Committee, for, referring to these very words, they later remonstrated, "What is this, Sir, but constituting yourself the judge instead of the Committee?"⁴⁰

Early in February, 1768, the Governor brought to the notice of the Select Committee a more flagrant instance of Col. Smith's having acted independently of the higher authorities. The facts of the case are as follows:—By the middle of the last month, Col. Smith had issued a general order⁴¹ to the Indian troops, requiring their implicit obedience to the British laws with respect to the crime of wilful murder.⁴² On being apprised of it, the Governor considered this action of Col. Smith to be "an encroachment" upon his authority, for the Colonel had issued this order "without having first obtained my permission or that of the Select Committee."⁴³ The Select Committee took a grave view of this indiscretion on the part of Col. Smith, and deemed him highly culpable in issuing a general order of such importance without previously obtaining their sanction. They at once ordered him to revoke the order, and severely reprimanded him for his irregular proceedings, adding significantly, "Had the Select Committee for such conduct dismissed you the service they would have but done their duty."⁴⁴

³⁹ Letter from Col. R. Smith, May 17, 1767.

⁴⁰ Letter to Col. R. Smith, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ Beng. Sel. Com., February 10, 1768.

⁴² General Order, dated January 17, 1768.

Beng. Sel. Com., February 10, 1768.

⁴³ A number of murders had been lately committed by the sepoy "on their women from motives of jealousy." *Vide* Letter from Col. R. Smith, March 2, 1768.

⁴⁴ Minute of the Governor, February 10, 1768.

⁴⁵ Letter to Col. R. Smith, February 10, 1768.

The strong attitude taken up by the Governor and Select Committee led to an acrimonious altercation with Col. Smith. The latter maintained⁴³ that if his order were revoked, the sepoys would commit murders with impunity. In defence of his action in issuing the order on his own authority, he urged that he was fully empowered by Act of Parliament to appoint general courts-martial for the trial of all offences, and that "the trial of native troops by British law," was "a practice of long standing and well-established in the army." "If the native troops," he asked, "are not to be tried by the British laws, by what laws are they to be tried? Are there any other regulations for the punishment of soldiers? I know of none." Furthermore, he bitterly complained that the Select Committee had deemed him fit for dismissal, even before they had heard all that he had to offer in his defence. Lately he had expressed his desire to go back to England, but now he purposely postponed⁴⁴ his departure, lest it should be suspected that he had quitted the service for fear of being dismissed by the Select Committee.

The Governor and Select Committee expressed⁴⁵ their strong disapproval of Col. Smith's defiant attitude,⁴⁶ and criticised the defence put forward by him on the following grounds. Firstly, under no Act of Parliament was the Commander of the forces authorised to hold courts-martial for the trial of the Indian sepoys. "Have you," they asked Col. Smith, "in the least attended to the Act of Parliament by which you say you are authorised? We will venture to declare in the negative."⁴⁷ Secondly, the subjection of the Indian sepoys to the British laws was an innovation which should not have been introduced without their own concurrence.⁴⁸

⁴³ Letter from Col. R. Smith, March 2, 1768.

⁴⁴ Letter from Col. R. Smith, March 4, 1768.

⁴⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., March 18, 1768.

⁴⁶ Letter to Court, March 24, 1768.

⁴⁷ Letter to Col. R. Smith, March 18, 1768.

⁴⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., February 10, 1768.

" Had the whole corps of Sepoys," they argued, " revolted on this occasion, by what law, either of equity or justice, could they have been tried for such revolt?"⁴⁹ Thirdly, justice and humanity demanded that the criminal should be forewarned of those unfamiliar laws by which he was to be punished. Lastly, by circulating the order in question, Col. Smith had assumed " a command more independent of the civil authority than is consistent with the establishment of this government."⁵⁰

Col. Smith's conduct obliged the Select Committee to re-emphasize the subordination of the military to the civil authorities in the following words:⁵¹ " The Governor has an undoubted authority to issue such orders to the troops, as the Select Committee, or he may judge conducive to the better regulation of the army, and that it is the duty of the Commander of the forces, as well as of every other officer, to obey and enforce the obedience of his orders. The Governor being to all intents and purposes at the head of every civil and military department, it is both necessary and proper, his authority as such should be preserved inviolate. Therefore it becomes the immediate duty of the Commander of the forces and of every other officer commanding a detachment not only to send returns to the Governor, but to correspond with him also, giving him immediate information of every detachment made, of any particular order which may be judged necessary to be issued, and, in short, of all material occurrences whatsoever; that no military appointment shall be made without the Governor's previous concurrence, except in cases of necessity, when immediate notice thereof must be transmitted to him, and his approbation must confirm such appointment."

Under peremptory orders from the Governor and Select Committee, Col. Smith was at last obliged⁵² to countermand his general order of the 17th of January, and direct the com-

⁴⁹ Letter to Col. R. Smith, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., March 18, 1768.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Beng. Sel. Com., April 15, 1768.

manding officers of Brigades to suspend the appointment of courts-martial for the trial of sepoy, although he repeatedly protested that he had "neither seen, heard, or known of any other laws existing in a British army,"⁵³ and that his appointment of Sepoy Courts-martial was in no way an innovation.⁵⁴ Col. Smith's contention was, however, based on unsatisfactory evidence, and there could remain no doubt about the fact that he had committed an error of judgment in issuing without the sanction or approval of the Governor and Select Committee a general order enforcing new laws for the trial of the Indian Sepoys.

A queer, but important disagreement arose between the Governor and Col. Smith over their respective claims to the title and privileges of the Commander-in-Chief. Verelst held that the Governor being the supreme head of the civil as well as military establishments was, by virtue of his very office, the Commander-in-Chief. In support of this, he urged that the Directors had clearly laid down in one of their recent letters,⁵⁵ "..... our Governor shall be considered as Commander-in-Chief of our forces." While disputing the legality of Col. Smith's action⁵⁶ in summoning courts-martial on his own authority, Verelst claimed⁵⁷ that it was the Governor who should be regarded as the Supreme Magistrate in all military as well as civil affairs, and that "no servants upon this establishment should tread closer upon the heels of a Governor than is expressly authorized by the Court of Directors." Col.

⁵³ Letter from Col. R. Smith, April 2, 1768.

⁵⁴ Col. Smith produced certain papers written in the Persian and Hindustani languages to prove that the trial of sepoy by British laws was not an innovation.

⁵⁵ *Vide* Beng. Sel. Com., April 27, 1768.

⁵⁶ Letter from Court, February 19, 1766.

⁵⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., October 3, 1767.

Letter from Col. R. Smith, September 16, 1767.

⁵⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., October 13, 1767.

Smith was accordingly warned⁵⁸ by the Select Committee that to dispute with the Governor a power which he and his predecessors had hitherto enjoyed would be considered as "an attempt to retrench his prerogative and diminish the influence of his station without reason, without necessity, and to the subversion of all order."

It appears that after considerable discussion in two different meetings of the Select Committee held shortly after Verelst's assumption of office, it had been informally agreed⁵⁹ that the Governor was to be regarded as the Commander-in-Chief, and that Col. Smith was to be called Commander-in-Chief under the Presidency. Col. Smith had assented to this arrangement, and it was at his request⁶⁰ that the matter had not been recorded in the minutes. This peculiar compromise was thus humorously described by Mr. Richard Barwell in a letter⁶¹ to his father, "The Title of Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Bengal is esteemed a jewel in the cap of your Governor's, as such Mr. V——t was for having the Colonel omit the word "Chief" in the orders he might issue, whilst the Colonel pointed out the absurdity This difference of sentiment between the great men was very near productive of an open quarrel, when Mr. V——t bethought him an expedient to which the Colonel acquiesced; and he is now Commander in Chief under the Presidency. This ridiculous circumstance has nevertheless created an animosity."

It must be stated here that the Governor's compliant attitude and want of firmness in this matter were strongly criticised by Clive who wrote⁶² to Verelst from England, "His (Col. Smith's) last, I should say his first dispute, whether the

⁵⁸ Letter to Col. R. Smith, October 13, 1767.

⁵⁹ *Vide* Verelst's Minute, July 19, 1768.

⁶⁰ *Vide* Statement and Examination of Mr. C. Russell, July 19, 1768.

⁶¹ Letter from Mr. R. Barwell to his father, December 9, 1767. (*Vide* Bengal; Past and Present, Vol. X, p. 11.)

⁶² Letter from Clive, November 7, 1767. (*Vide* Malcolm; Life of Lord Clive, III, pp. 213-14.)

Governor or the Commanding officer of the troops ought to have the title of Commander-in-Chief was such an open and audacious attack upon the dignity of your office, that I am surprised you let it pass unnoticed. Had a minute been made of it, he would infallibly have been dismissed the service." Clive warned the Governor against the undesirable consequences which might ensue from the least relaxation of command over the military officers, and advised him to hold them under the strictest subordination and control.

The compromise was, however, no more than a temporary and verbal understanding, and no attempt was subsequently made to define and demarcate the powers and jurisdiction of the Governor and the so-called Commander-in-Chief under the Presidency. The result was that the original disagreement⁶³ between the Governor and Col. Smith reappeared in a more bitter form after the dispute in connection with the appointment of Sepoy courts-martial by the latter. The controversy became acute in April, 1768, when Col. Smith returned to Calcutta and resumed his membership of the Select Committee.

In the Select Committee 'meeting'⁶⁴ of the 27th of April, Col. Smith raised the question as to whether the Governor could send " of himself, at all times, and on all occasions, whatever orders he shall judge necessary to Colonel Smith, or to the Commanding Officer of the Army." Mr. Floyer submitted that the Governor had the right to issue orders in all ordinary matters " under the control of the Select Committee," but that orders " with regard to the march of the army or of a considerable detachment, the engaging in any enterprize of warlike preparations, and the entering into treaties " could be issued by the Select Committee alone. Messrs Verelst, Cartier,

⁶³ Verelst's personal relations with Col. Smith had been further strained of late on account of his objection to the latter's private trade in Oudh. (*Vide* his letter to Col. R. Smith, January 31, 1768, and the latter's reply dated February 8, 1768. Second Report, 1772, pp. 288—291.) Their disagreement was accentuated by the fact that Col. Smith's " ideas of the conduct of Sujah-al-Dowlah " were totally different from those of the Governor. *Vide* Letter to Court, March 28, 1768.

⁶⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., April 27, 1768.

and Becher admitted that in all major matters such as war, treaty, or peace the Select Committee alone had the right to issue final orders, but they maintained that the Governor ought to be deemed to be the Commander-in-Chief, and that, as such, he did possess the authority to issue orders to all commanding officers, including Col. Smith.

The discussion over this question was resumed on the 19th of July.²⁵ Col. Smith presented his own minute on the subject, and in reply to the opinions of the other members, he asserted that the Governor's powers were strictly limited, and that the Select Committee could not invest him with the authority to claim implicit obedience from the commanding officers. He criticized the views of his colleagues as much too vague, and demanded a clear decision on the point under dispute, for, as he rightly pointed out, "in points of military subordination there ought not to be left the smallest room for doubt."

The Governor thereupon emphatically repudiated "the unmerited censure on the Committee" as well as "the reflection" on his own conduct, as expressed in Col. Smith's minute, and asserted that the Commanding Officer was "struggling to shake off the strongest bond by which he is subjected to the Civil authority." He closed his long statement on Col. Smith's minute with the challenge, "My determined resolution is to give up the title and authority of Commander-in-Chief at the same time that I quit the reins of government."

After the Governor's statement was read, Messrs Floyer, Becher, and Cartier submitted their respective minutes unanimously supporting the Governor's claim to hold the title of Commander-in-Chief. They held that Col. Smith, being the second officer, was bound to obey all such orders from the Governor as the latter by virtue of his station as Commander-in-Chief might issue with the concurrence of the Select Committee.

²⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., July 19, 1768.

Letter to Court, September 13, 1768.

The discussion being over, the Select Committee decided finally to confirm the Governor's appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the forces, and resolved that all orders issued by him within the limitation prescribed by them should be implicitly obeyed as the orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the forces. The Select Committee also invested the Governor with powers to issue such general orders as might be deemed by him necessary and proper for the better regulation of the army, to order detachments, to direct their operations during the course of their services, to appoint subaltern officers, and to correspond with the several commanding officers in the army, wherever they might be stationed. It was, however, agreed that the Governor should remain responsible to the Select Committee, to whom he was at all times to make known the orders he might issue, and that their orders, whenever they might think proper to issue them, should supersede any sent by him alone.

After this resolution was passed, Col. Smith raised the next question as to whether the Governor could on any occasion take command of the army in person. After Messrs Floyer, Becher, and Cartier had expressed their opinions on this question, the Select Committee unanimously agreed that upon all occasions the Governor was "to be received at the army, or in the garrisons, with all honours due to a Commander-in-Chief," but that he could not "take upon himself in person the command of the army, or any part of it." Thus, a long drawn out and seemingly futile dispute was brought to an end to the apparent satisfaction of the parties concerned.

It is interesting to note that the Directors, in their general letter⁶⁶ of the 16th March, 1768, explicitly laid down once again that all military officers were to obey the orders of the Governor and Council at each Presidency, "who are the Company's Legal Representatives," as also such orders as they might receive from any of the Company's civil servants to whom the Governor and Council should think fit to delegate

⁶⁶ Letter from Court. March 16, 1768.

their authority. A few months ago they had already declared,⁶⁷ " . . . upon any Doubt or Disobedience, or indeed for whatever cause may appear sufficient to the Majority of the Council, they may dismiss any officer, be his Rank what will, without assigning such officer any other Reason but your own Pleasure, reserving the Justification of your Conduct to us, from whom you derive your authority, and to whom alone you are accountable." The Directors now further ordered⁶⁸ that in the event of any misbehaviour on the part of a military Officer the Governor and Council might, if they so desired, take away his commission "without bringing him before a court martial."

The Directors, however, expressed⁶⁹ their disapprobation of the altercations between the Governor and Select Committee and Col. Smith. They deemed it necessary for the efficiency of the government that the dignity of both should be preserved. "We commend," they wrote in the course of this letter, "your checking all Encroachments on the Civil Power; but it is also essential that the Commander-in-Chief should appear to be supported by you in the due Exercise of his office." They also warned⁷⁰ the Governor and Select Committee against the abuse of their powers of control over the military in the following words, "As we have taken great precaution to establish the entire Dependency of the Military on the Civil Power, we shall deem you and the Select Committee highly responsible for any abuse of that Power in the unequal distribution of Favour or Justice towards them."

Even a cursory examination of Verelst's disputes with Col. Smith would serve to reveal the weakness and irresolution of the Governor. That Col. Smith had been guilty of insubordination was clear, yet the Governor fought shy of taking the drastic step of punishing or dismissing him. The wordy

⁶⁷ Letter from Court, January 12, 1768.

⁶⁸ Letter from Court, March 16, 1768.

⁶⁹ Letter from Court, November 11, 1768.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

warfare which he and the Select Committee chose to carry on with the Colonel was not only undignified, but highly injudicious. The latter, as the Directors rightly pointed out, should either have been supported, or dismissed.

enormous sum was a permanent loss to the currency of the province.

The tribute of twenty-six lakhs of rupees paid to Shah Alam passed out of Bengal every year, and constituted a heavy drain¹ on the currency of the country. Had the Emperor's residence been fixed at some place within Bengal, this sum would have returned in expenditure to the circulation of the province. Verelst's scheme regarding an exchange of the Emperor's dominions of Allahabad and Korah for the districts of Ghazipore and Benares belonging to the Vazir of Oudh could not, however, materialise owing to various practical difficulties involved therein.²

The disbursement for the Third Brigade stationed at Allahabad amounted to more than twenty lakhs³ of rupees per year.⁴ This amount too was annually lost⁵ to the current specie of the country. Towards the close of 1768 it was calculated that nearly eighty lakhs of rupees⁶ had been spent out of Bengal during the last three years on account of the heavy expenses¹⁰ of the Third Brigade. It was primarily to avoid this drain of specie that the Brigade was ultimately withdrawn¹¹ from Allahabad in 1769.

The annual exports¹² of bullion to China also aggravated

the scarcity¹³ of money in Bengal. The authorities at Calcutta had to provide funds¹⁴ for the Company's China investment, and for this purpose they exported annually about¹⁵ a quarter of a million sterling. From the report¹⁶ of Mr. John Hoole, Auditor of Indian Accounts, the following figures¹⁷ regarding the export of bullion to China may be cited:—

In 1765	...	...	£307,409	12	6
.. 1766	...	...	£294,526	2	8
.. 1769	...	...	£162,137	10	0

Notwithstanding the remonstrances¹⁸ of the Governor and Select Committee, the necessities of the China investment obliged the Directors to order more than thirty lakhs annually in silver from Bengal to China.¹⁹ On being informed of the scarcity of coin in Bengal, the Directors ordered the President and Council to provide in concert with the other Presidencies at least twenty-four lakhs of rupees for the China investment, adding, "we positively direct that you do not, under any pretence whatsoever, omit to supply them (i.e., the China Council) with that sum."²⁰ In 1767 and 1768, however, the authorities were so hard pressed²¹ for money that they could not send²² the whole of the required amount. In 1768, for

¹³ Beng. Sel. Com., October 24, 1767.

¹⁴ Ninth Report of the Select Committee, 1783, p. 16.

¹⁵ "The specie carried out by the Company for the China market in the space of three years amounts to about £720,000." *Vide* Sir James Steuart; *The Principles of Money Applied to the Present State of the Coin of Bengal*, 1772, pp. 26, 32, 57, etc.

¹⁶ *Vide* his "Present State of the English East India Company's Affairs," 1772, p. 7.

¹⁷ Report from the Committee of Secrecy, 1773.

¹⁸ Letter to Court, September 26, 1767, "We have frequently expressed to you our apprehensions lest the annual exportation of treasure to China would produce a scarcity of money in the country."

¹⁹ Verelst's View, etc., p. 101.

²⁰ Letter from Court, November 11, 1768.

²¹ Beng. Sel. Com., September 4, 1768.

²² Hoole, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

example, they managed to send twenty-four lakhs²³ in all, for, as they bewailed towards close of the year, "This settlement, for some months past, has in fact been in a state of bankruptcy. Trade is totally put a stop to; and even the most reputable of your servants can with difficulty procure silver sufficient for the payment of their servants' wages."²⁴ Thus, the large exportation of silver to China, which brought no imports²⁵ in exchange remained a heavy burden²⁶ on the dwindling currency of Bengal.

Large remittances had to be sent annually from Bengal to the other Presidencies and Settlements.²⁷ According to the Report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773, the net amount of such remittances between May, 1761, and April, 1771, in bullion, bills, goods and stores was £2,358,298.²⁸ Madras required an almost constant supply of specie from Bengal to provide for its investment, as also to defray the cost of the wars,²⁹ while Bombay too largely depended on Bengal for the ordinary expenses of its establishment.³⁰ The authorities at Calcutta were not free to withhold such assistance, as the principle of mutual co-operation among the Presidencies had long been established, and frequently enjoined upon by the

²³ Letter to Court, February 3, 1768.

²⁴ Letter to Court, November 21, 1768.

²⁵ Letter to Court, September 26, 1768.

²⁶ Verelst's View, etc., p. 87.

²⁷ Letter to Court, March 24, 1768.

"The great demands which have been made on this Presidency for supplies of money from every quarter have reduced your treasury to a very low state."

²⁸ The amount of remittances to other settlements from Bengal was £2,859,678, while that from other settlements to Bengal was £501,380. (*Vide* Report from the Committee of Secrecy, 1773.)

²⁹ Letter to Court, March 24, 1768.

³⁰ Ninth Report from the Select Committee, 1783, says, "Bengal sends a regular Supply, in time of Peace to those Presidencies which are unequal to their own Establishment. To Bombay, the Remittance in Money, Bills, or Goods, for none of which there is a Return, amounts to One hundred and Sixty thousands Pounds a year at a medium."

Directors since the out-break of the Anglo-French wars in India.³¹ In Verelst's time, the Directors once again reiterated the principle in the following emphatic terms. "You must continue to supply our other Presidencies with such sums as they may apply to you for to answer their various demands agreeably to the orders we have given them for so doing."³²

The other European Companies trading in Bengal sometimes exported³³ bullion in large quantities. In Verelst's time, for example, there were serious disputes with the French over their alleged exportation³⁴ of silver to Pondicherry. A 'farman' was obtained from the Emperor, prohibiting such clandestine exportation of bullion from the country,³⁵ and orders were issued to the authorities at Murshidabad to impose such penalty on disobedience of the royal command as they might think proper, for, as the Governor and Select Committee represented to the Directors, "The French at Chandernagore having of late taken up large sums of money in silver specie, and transmitted the same to Pondicherry, we are apprehensive that such a proceeding must be productive of dangerous consequences to this country, unless a stop was put to it in future."³⁶

After the assumption of the Diwani the Company ceased to send out specie from England, and the investment in Bengal was thereafter provided out of the surplus of the territorial revenues of the province. The stoppage of this annual influx of specie imposed a serious³⁷ drain on the currency, specially

³¹ Letter from Court, March 26, 1755.

Letter from Court, March 25, 1757.

Letter from Court, April 1, 1760.

Letter from Court, January 21, 1761.

Letter from Court, December 23, 1761.

Letter from Court, November 21, 1766, etc.

³² Letter from Court, November 11, 1768.

³³ Verelst's View, etc., p. 101.

Siyar (Lucknow Text), p. 783.

³⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., March 31, 1768, etc.

³⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., July 23, 1768, etc.

³⁶ Letter to Court, September 13, 1768.

³⁷ Letter to Court, September 26, 1768.

because there was a large increase³⁸ in the investment after Clive's departure. The investment in the last year of Clive's administration had amounted to £565,461, but it rose to £742,288³⁹ during Verelst's term of office.⁴⁰ The danger from so great an enhancement of the investment without a corresponding increase in the import of bullion was fully realised by the authorities, as will be seen from their repeated remonstrances⁴¹ to the Directors, but the latter were not only unwilling to export any bullion from England, but demanded a steady increase in the investments.⁴² In 1769, Verelst thus described the evil consequences of this policy in one of his personal letters to the Directors, "But now the whole amount of the lands is swallowed up in one gulph—your treasury; nor does any part of it return into the circulation, except the sums issued for our investment and necessary expenses; so that there ensues an annual loss to the currency, equal to the difference between the aggregate of the investment and disbursements, and the total of its revenues."⁴³

The European companies too gradually reduced⁴⁴ their imports of bullion, and bought their goods with money received from private parties who took bills⁴⁵ upon the respective companies in Europe. The Company's servants and free merchants, while remitting⁴⁶ their fortunes out of the country

³⁸ Beng. Pub. Cons., March 20, 1769.

³⁹ In the very first year of Verelst's administration the investment increased to £720,000. *Vide* Letter to Court, *op. cit.*

⁴⁰ Report from the Committee of Secrecy, 1773. Hoole, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁴¹ Letter to Court, September 26, 1767.

Letter to Court, March 28, 1768.

Letter to Court, April 5, 1768, etc.

⁴² Beng. Sel. Com., March 10, 1767.

Beng. Sel. Com., July 6, 1767, etc.

⁴³ Letter to Court, April 5, 1769.

⁴⁴ Letter to Court, September 25, 1769.

⁴⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., March 20, 1769.

⁴⁶ The popular belief was that the Europeans took away their fortunes in specie. According to *Siyar* (Lucknow Text), p. 783, "It is common to

preferred to purchase bills on the French and the Dutch companies, as the Court of Directors would not allow⁴⁷ such bills to be drawn on them,⁴⁸ and when they allowed it, they offered too low a rate of exchange to be generally acceptable.⁴⁹ The result was that the French and the Dutch, by granting bills for such sums as were paid into their treasuries in silver, were always amply supplied with money, and, as Verelst complained, were "enabled to rival us in trade, in our own territories, with our own money."⁵⁰ The depletion of the currency accelerated by such capital drain⁵¹ would be apparent from the fact that nearly one million pounds⁵² used to be remitted to Europe every year through the foreign companies for which there were no corresponding imports in return. In vain did the authorities warn the Directors that unless the foreign nations were compelled to import bullion, the revenues would ultimately have to be collected in the commodities produced in the country for want of specie.⁵³

see every year five or six Englishmen, or even more, who repair to their homes with large fortunes. Lakhs piled upon lakhs have therefore been drained from this country." In fact, however, the drain was chiefly in goods for, "To send silver into Europe would be to send it from the best to the worst market." (Ninth Report, 1783, p. 15.) Remittances were made in diamonds too. (Lord Clive's speech in the House of Commons, 1772, p. 9).

⁴⁷ Letter to Court, September 26, 1768, "The extent of the Dutch and French credit exceeds all conception, and their bills are even solicited as favours."

⁴⁸ Letter to Court, September 13, 1768.

⁴⁹ Letter to Court, September 26, 1767.

" . . . by lowering exchange, and cutting off interest for a complete year after bills are presented, you throw every advantage on the side of foreign remittances."

⁵⁰ Letter to Court, April 5, 1769.

⁵¹ Dow, *op. cit.*, p. exxiv, etc.

⁵² Ninth Report from the Select Committee, 1783.

⁵³ Letter to Court, September 26, 1768.

Letter to Court, November 21, 1768.

Owing to troubled conditions in Asia the external trade of Bengal had dwindled⁵⁴ of late with the result that there was now very little influx⁵⁵ of specie from the other parts of India or from countries outside India. The total balance in favour of Bengal from its Asiatic commerce was estimated by the authorities in 1767 at no more than fifteen lakhs⁵⁶ of rupees for the space of four years.⁵⁷ Thus, the immense quantities of specie⁵⁸ received through the channel of external⁵⁹ trade, which had formerly enabled Bengal to bear up against the heavy annual drain on its currency were no longer available.⁶⁰

The scarcity of coin was further accentuated⁶¹ by the Indian practice of hoarding or burying precious metals in times of political crisis. Since the dreadful incursions of the Marathas in the time of Alivardi Khan down to the rise of the English power, Bengal had passed through a rapid succession of political upheavals which must have forced the wealthy to conceal their treasures, or seek safety in flight.⁶² Large quantities of specie were also lost to the circulation through conversion into ornaments for women.

The character of the coinage was also to some extent responsible for the growing diminution of the current specie.

⁵⁴ Dow, *op. cit.*, pp. cxxiv—vi.

Beng. Pub. Cons., March 20, 1769.

Letter to Court, April 5, 1769.

⁵⁵ Verelst's View, etc., pp. 85-86.

⁵⁶ Letter to Court, September 26, 1767.

⁵⁷ The value of this trade, according to Dow, was about £100,000 per annum (Dow, *op. cit.*, p. cxxvi). The authorities appear to have reckoned it as less than half of this sum, because according to their estimate, the balance in favour of Bengal amounted to about £46,000 per annum.

⁵⁸ Bengal had formerly been "the sink where gold and silver disappeared without the least prospect of return." Dow, *op. cit.*, p. cxii.

⁵⁹ Bolts: Considerations on India Affairs. p. 21.

⁶⁰ Letter to Court, April 5, 1769.

Beng. Pub. Cons., March 20, 1769.

⁶¹ Dow, *op. cit.*, p. cxiii.

⁶² Letter to Court, September 26, 1768

Letter from Court, June 30, 1769.

The silver 'sikkahs' of Bengal, being without alloy, were regarded as superior to those of the other parts of India, and therefore large sums were annually carried out of the province.⁶³ Owing to triennial re-coinage, and also because of the establishment of an annual discount or 'batta,' the 'sikkah' rupee could never lose its standard purity,⁶⁴ and, as such, was naturally prized even outside Bengal.

The gold currency of 1766⁶⁵ devised to counteract⁶⁶ the shortage of currency had further aggravated⁶⁷ the evil. The gold mohurs issued in 1766 were overvalued to the extent of 17½ per cent. The result was that silver tended to disappear from circulation, because it was 17½ per cent more profitable to make payments in gold. When silver was available at all, it commanded a heavy premium; in other words, the value of gold fell heavily in terms of silver.⁶⁸ In Verelst's time the gold mohurs of 1766 passed at a discount even up to 38 per cent.⁶⁹ Those who held silver preferred to send it out of Bengal either in exchange for gold, or for purposes of trade. Thus, the over-rated gold currency made the scarcity of coin worse by driving out silver from the circulation.⁷⁰ Such was the scarcity of silver that early in 1768 the authorities had to inform⁷¹ the Directors that it was difficult to procure silver in

⁶³ *Vide* Regulations prepared by Warren Hastings for the Government of Bengal (British Museum Add. MS. 29203), quoted by Monckton Jones, *Warren Hastings in Bengal*, p. 167.

⁶⁴ Verelst's View, etc., p. 96.

⁶⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 2 and 9, 1766.

⁶⁶ Verelst's View, etc., p. 96.

⁶⁷ The Directors had at first hoped that the gold currency would prevent the scarcity of silver. (Beng. Sel. Com., February 23, 1767.)

⁶⁸ Beng. Pub. Cons., September 1, 1768.

⁶⁹ Verelst's View, etc., p. 101.

Bolts, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁷⁰ The three Commissioners sent out in 1769 were directed to enquire, among other things, if the scarcity of silver was due to "the fatal consequences of the Gold Coinage." Letter from Court, September 15, 1769.

⁷¹ Letter to Court; February, 1768.

exchange even for a hundred gold mohurs! Remittances to Madras had frequently to be sent in⁷² gold mohurs which were there either exchanged for silver, or coined into *pagodas* at a loss of 13 per cent.⁷³ Efforts were also made to prevail on the Emperor to accept gold mohurs in part payment of his tribute.⁷⁴ From the minutes of the Council it appears that in all about 134,417 gold mohurs were sent to Madras upto the close of August, 1768.⁷⁵

Soon after his assumption of office. Verelst was called upon to rectify one of the principal errors of the bimetallic plan of his predecessor. The gold mohurs issued in 1766 were of the fineness of 20 carats,⁷⁶ and contained an admixture of one-sixth part of an alloy.⁷⁷ The debasement⁷⁸ caused by such a large proportion of alloy naturally made the gold mohurs unpopular, and the 'Sarraf's' were reported to be extremely averse⁷⁹ to receiving them in exchange for silver. For example, Mr. Rumbold, Supervisor of the Collections of Bihar, represented⁸⁰ in March, 1767, that a large stock of gold mohurs had accumulated owing to the unwillingness of the 'Sarraf's' to accept them, and asked for instructions regarding their final disposal. It is interesting to note that the Governor and Select

⁷² Beng. Sel. Com., October 24 and December 11, 1767. Letter to Court, February 3 and January 6, 1769.

⁷³ Verelst's View, etc. p. 102.

Bolts, op. cit., p. 204.

⁷⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., November 29, 1768.

⁷⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., September 1, 1768.

⁷⁶ Verelst's View, etc., p. 98.

⁷⁷ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 2, 1766.

⁷⁸ In reply to the charge of frauds in the gold coinage, Clive declared in the course of his speech in the House of Commons. "... the assay and mint master by whose judgment we were guided was a very able and a very honest man." Vide his Speech, p. 10.

⁷⁹ Beng. Sel. Com. March 27, 1767.

"... the shrophs are very averse to receiving them, so much is the gold adulterated."

⁸⁰ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, March 18, 1767.

Committee considered it to be highly damaging to the Company's credit to insist on issuing the debased mohurs coined at Patna. They came to the decision that the Company should rather incur the loss that might result from re-coinage than suffer any undue debasement of the currency. Mr. Rumbold was accordingly directed to order the whole stock at Patna to be refined "full 3 per cent in value."⁸¹

The unsatisfactory state of the silver currency next engaged the attention of the authorities. The rupee was the standard circulating medium, but there were rupees of different kinds,⁸² and various values⁸³ from the full 'sikkah' to the 'Vaziri' which was little more than half its value. There were a number of mints in the province, and no two among them issued coins of a uniform weight or value.⁸⁴ Not one of the minted rupees could thus be regarded as the standard coin. The 'sarrafs' charged varying amounts of 'batta'⁸⁵ on the different types of coins according to their respective fineness and weight, and valued them in gross by an imaginary standard coin, called the *current rupee*. To obviate this fluctuating and complicated state of the currency, the authorities desired to fix the 'sikkah' on a permanent footing,⁸⁶ and consolidate the various species of coins after assigning to them an invariable and permanent valuation.⁸⁷ With this end in view, they directed⁸⁸ Muhammad Riza Khan early in November, 1767, to deliberate on the plan in all its bearings, and obtain the opinion and advice of experts on the proposed scheme.

⁸¹ Letter to Mr. T. Rumbold, March 27, 1767.

⁸² Beng. Sel. Com., October 6, 1768.

⁸³ Verelst's View, etc., pp. 89, 94.

Bolts, *op. cit.* pp. 157-58, 205, etc.

⁸⁴ It may be noted that of twenty-eight large payments between 1764 and 1769 inclusive, of which there exists an accurate record, only three could be made in rupees of standard purity, i.e., in 'sikkahs.' *Vide* Sir James Steuart, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁸⁵ Bolts, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

⁸⁶ The Directors had already asked for this reform. *Vide* Letter from Court, November 21, 1766.

⁸⁷ Beng. Pub. Cons., October 22, 1767.

⁸⁸ Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 204.

Muhammad Riza Khan concurred in the opinion of the Governor and Council that the great diversity in the weight and fineness of coins was a universal grievance, and suggested that the whole currency system should be reformed and simplified.⁸⁰ He offered certain valuable suggestions for the reform of the currency, which were duly considered by the Council at their meeting of the 24th of December.⁸⁰ Muhammad Riza Khan's proposals⁸¹ were, firstly, that the 'sikkahs' of Calcutta, Murshidabad, Patna and Dacca should be of uniform weight and fineness, secondly, that the weight and fineness of the several species of Arcot rupees,⁸² such as English, French, Surat, Benares, Etawah, Agra, etc., current in Bengal, should be duly assayed and compared with the others, thirdly, that the rate of exchange on these coins should be permanently established, and, lastly, that one of these should be selected and declared as the only current coin of the province.

The equalisation of the rupees appeared to be a desirable reform, but in view of the difficulties that might arise from any precipitate decision in this manner, the Council agreed⁸³ to postpone the measure for the present. They, however, decided⁸⁴ to promote the circulation of the gold mohurs already

⁸⁰ Letter from Muhammad Riza Khan, O. C., December 24, 1767, No. 2 (a).

⁸⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons., December 24, 1767.

⁸¹ Trans. R. 1767—68, No. 430.

⁸² The value of the following species of Arcot rupees, compared with the 'sikkah,' is noteworthy:—

Bissun Arcots, per sikkah weight 100, Rs. 97, 14, 0

French Arcots, per sikkah weight 100, Rs. 97, 0, 0

Madras Arcots, per sikkah weight 100, Rs. 96, 4, 9

Masulipatam Arcots, per sikkah weight 100, Rs. 96, 0, 0

Calcutta Arcots, per sikkah weight 100, Rs. 85, 6, 6

Murshidabad Arcots, per sikkah weight 100, Rs. 95, 6, 6

Surat Arcots, per sikkah weight 100, Rs. 94, 6, 6

Benares Arcots, per sikkah weight 100, Rs. 92, 6, 6, etc, etc.

⁸³ Beng. Pub. Cons., December 24, 1767.

⁸⁴ Vide Letter from Mr. Alexander Campbell O. C., December 24, 1767, No. 3

coined not only with a view to abolish the obnoxious 'batta' on rupees, but also to obviate the distress caused by the general scarcity of coin. It was further decided to institute a regular monthly assay of the entire coinage of the province.

Despite all their efforts to enforce the gold currency of 1766, the authorities failed to make it acceptable to the people. The scarcity of silver became so acute that the 'Sarrafis' complained that they had no silver to give in exchange for the gold mohurs.⁹⁵ There were in consequence a large number of bankruptcies⁹⁶ among the merchants and 'Sarrafis.' The want⁹⁷ of a sufficient amount of silver made it increasingly difficult for the townspeople to procure even common necessities, or meet their petty liabilities. According to law, the gold mohur was valued at fourteen 'sikkah' rupees⁹⁸—a rate which was far in excess of its intrinsic value in silver. Economic laws, however, triumphed over official ingenuity, and the gold mohurs were publicly sold⁹⁹ in the markets at a heavy discount. Mr. James Alexander, Mint Master, rightly brought¹⁰⁰ to the notice of the Council in May, 1768, that the merchants and 'sarrafis' could not with justice be forced to exchange silver at a stated rate, unless they were supplied with that article in such amounts as would answer the purpose, and suggested that the coinage of the gold mohurs should either be put an end to, or, alternatively, the gold currency should be of the fineness of the old Delhi standard.

⁹⁵ Letter to Court, February 3, 1768.

Beng. Pub. Cons., May 18, 1768.

Beng. Sel. Com., July 23, 1768.

⁹⁶ Trans. R. 1768, No. 228.

⁹⁷ Letter from Mr. Rumbold, August 13, 1768.

(Beng. Sel. Com., September 4, 1768.).

⁹⁸ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 2, 1766.

Verelst's View, etc., p. 98.

⁹⁹ Beng. Pub. Cons., May 18, 1768.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Mr. James Alexander, O. C., May 18, 1768, No. 2(a).

On the 1st of September, the Council discussed¹⁰¹ the situation in detail. The Governor submitted an exhaustive minute,¹⁰² pointing out the great inconveniences resulting from the establishment of the gold currency. He made it clear that the gold currency had been introduced, firstly, to curb the impositions of the 'sarrafs' in their arbitrary enhancement and reduction of the 'batta' on silver rupees, secondly, to encourage the import of gold by putting a current value upon it considerably above its intrinsic value, thirdly, to prevent the export of gold "from the certain loss of that established advance," fourthly, to remedy the evil caused by the circulation of a variety of coins, and lastly, to get over the scarcity of the current specie. These objects, the Governor urged, could not be fully realised because¹⁰³ of the continued drain of specie, the growing competition in the purchase of silver, the intrigues of the 'sarrafs,' and the disallowance of an annual discount on the gold mohurs as suggested¹⁰⁴ by Jagat Seth.

The Governor explained that as a result of the introduction of the gold coinage the silver rupee had risen from 8 to 12 per cent above par, and that much of the available silver was either being secreted by the 'sarrafs' to keep up the exorbitant 'batta,' or was sold at an extravagant premium to those whom necessity obliged to make remittances through the Dutch and the French who positively refused to receive any other specie than silver. He, therefore, recommended the immediate withdrawal of the gold mohurs,¹⁰⁵ and proposed that notes bearing interest of 8 per cent per annum should be

101 Beng. Pub. Cons., September 1, 1768.

102 O. C., September 1, 1768, No. 2 (a).

103 Verelst's Minute, *op. cit.*

Verelst's View, etc., pp. 100—2. a

104 According to Verelst, the neglect of Jagat Seth's advice was perhaps "the greatest error in the plan of 1766."

105 The total number of gold mohurs coined according to the regulations of 1766 was 263,145. (*Vide Verelst's View, etc., p. 104, footnote.*)

allowed in exchange of the mohurs paid into the treasury at the official rate of 14 'sikkah' rupees for each mohur. By this means, firstly, large sums would flow into the treasury, which might be employed on the Company's account, secondly, the loss to the Company would be comparatively small, as the surplus of the mohurs received and re-issued could be sent to Madras at a smaller discount than rupees, and lastly, many people might hand over considerable sums in this fund in preference to remitting them to Europe through foreign nations.

The Council readily assented to the proposal of the Governor, and resolved¹⁰⁶ to abolish the gold currency and decided to receive into the treasury all gold mohurs of the late currency at the full rate of 14 'sikkah' rupees, and for every sum of, and above the value of Rs. 1000 paid within the space of 15 days to issue interest notes, bearing an interest of 8 per cent per annum, payable in, or within the space of twelve months. It was further agreed that no gold mohurs so received were to be re-issued from the treasury. Muhammad Riza Khan was directed to send proper instructions to the various mints to withhold the gold coinage.

The withdrawal of the gold currency did not improve matters in any way. On the country, the distress¹⁰⁷ of the whole population, European and Indian, became only more acute. Early in December, the authorities were pressed¹⁰⁸ by the principal inhabitants of Calcutta to devise some means of relief from the ruinous effects of the increasing scarcity of specie. The European inhabitants bitterly complained¹⁰⁹ of

106 Beng. Pub. Cons., September 1, 1768.

Letter to Court, September 13, 1768.

107 Letter to Court, November 21, 1768.

"Even the most reputable of your servants can with difficulty procure silver sufficient for the payment of their servants' wages."

108 Verelst's View, etc., p. 103.

109 Letter from the European merchants and principal inhabitants of Calcutta, December 6, 1768. (*Vide* I. O. Cons., 1768—9, pp. 77—81.) The

the universal distress in the settlement, and represented that the situation was getting so serious that every merchant in Calcutta was on the verge of bankruptcy. As a remedy for this evil, they suggested the issue of gold mohurs, half mohurs, and quarter mohurs equal in value and standard to Delhi ones, and proposed that the 'Sarraf's' should be strictly forbidden, under pain of severe fine and imprisonment, to charge more than one per cent for exchanging them into silver. The American merchants of Calcutta likewise represented¹¹⁰ that the scarcity of coin in the city was so great that even the best houses were "distressed for daily provisions" and were in danger of becoming bankrupt "in the midst of wealth and plenty." By way of remedy, they proposed the immediate coinage of gold mohurs, with all their divisions and sub-divisions to one anna, since, as they pointed out with reason, "any coin whatever is better than no coin at all!"

The Governor and Council were at last compelled to move in the matter, when in March 1768, the Mayor's Court of Calcutta presented¹¹¹ a strong representation to them, setting forth the great difficulties to which "all ranks of people" were being reduced from the growing scarcity of silver, and warned that the sufferings of the inhabitants would become intolerable, unless a speedy and effectual relief was afforded to them. According to the petition of the Mayor's Court the deficiency of currency was already so abnormal that there did not exist sufficient coinage even "for the private economy of the inhabitants of Calcutta," and that even the fair and honest dealer was being prosecuted every day for inability to satisfy the claim of his creditors "from the impossibility of obtaining payment from his debtors."

letter was not written in 1769, as is erroneously stated in works like Hunter's *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 305, Sinha's *Economic Annals of Bengal*, p. 59, etc. etc

¹¹⁰ Petition from the Armenian merchants settled in Calcutta. (*Vide* I. O. Cons., 1768—9, pp. 81—83, and Verelst's View, etc., Appendix p. 243.)

¹¹¹ Letter from the Mayor's Court, March 14, 1769, *Vide* Beng. Pub. Cons., March 20, 1769, and Verelst's View, etc., Appendix, p. 242.

4. Every piece of gold weighing 100 mohurs delivered into the mint should be coined into 25 mohurs, 36 halves ('adhelis'), 72 quarters ('sukis'), 144 eighths ('dowanis'), and 336 sixteenths ('yakanis'). In this manner, a piece of gold, weighing 100 mohurs, should yield 613 coins.
5. For the prevention of fraud, officers should be appointed to superintend on behalf of the Company as Diwan of the Subah the assay of all gold received in the mints of Patna, Murshidabad, and Dacca jointly with the assay-masters of the *Nizamat*. The gold that is not jointly assayed by the officers of the Company and the *Nizamat* should not be made into coins.
6. A small fee equivalent¹¹⁰ to the actual cost of coinage should be fixed. No other duty should be charged on behalf of the *Nizamat*, the Company, the Governor, or the Mint-Master.
7. No Mint-Master, or other official shall refuse to receive any gold for coinage or assay. The Assay-Master shall assay every quantity of gold brought to him, and give the proprietor a certificate specifying the assay.
8. The new gold coinage should be issued and received in all public and private disbursements and receipts.

The authorities expected the following advantages from the enforcement of the aforesaid scheme. In the first place, the depleted currency would be vastly augmented, and the smaller gold coins would gradually take the place of silver even in petty disbursements and receipts. In the second place, the large quantities of gold now lying idle in Calcutta, for want of a fixed gold currency, would flow into the general circulation

¹¹⁰ It was later fixed at one per cent.

Beng. Pub. Cons., June 17, 1769.

of the currency, instead of remaining as mere merchandise. In the third place, as the proportion of 1/16 of seventeen 'sikkah' annas of gold to one 'sikkah' rupee was as near as possible to their relative value, the new currency would be easily enforced everywhere, notwithstanding any combination or artifice on the part of the 'sarrafs;' and in the event of its future withdrawal, the Company would sustain little financial loss. In the last place, the scheme of the French to distress the settlement by drawing large sums in silver in payment for their Europe bills would be rendered abortive by the introduction of a currency nearly as convenient, and of as fair a standard, as the one they had so earnestly laboured to engross.

The new bimetallic scheme was warmly commended¹¹⁷ by Muhammad Riza Khan who wrote to the Governor that if the proposed gold currency were strictly enforced in the payment of the revenue,¹¹⁸ and in all other public transactions, both private and official business would be carried on without those serious delays and interruptions which now arose from the general scarcity of silver. The Nawab too, on being asked to give¹¹⁹ his opinion on the scheme, intimated his wholehearted approval.¹²⁰ Thereupon the Governor addressed a customary 'arzi'¹²¹ to the Emperor, requesting the necessary royal sanction to the proposed re-issue of the old Delhi gold currency, and asked for his active co-operation in the enforcement thereof. The Governor apprehended that interested persons might try to obstruct¹²² the plan in view, hence he warned the Emperor against the insinuations of such people, and demand-

¹¹⁷ Beng. Pub. Cons., March 28, 1769.

¹¹⁸ Orders were later issued for receiving gold when offered in payment of the revenues. (Letter from Mr. R. Becher, May 5, 1769, Beng. Pub. Cons., May 8, 1769, Trans. R. 1769, No. 68, and Cop. V. 1769, No. 26.)

¹¹⁹ Cop. I. 1769, No. 1.

¹²⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons., April 26, 1769.

¹²¹ Cop. I. 1769, No. 10.

¹²² Cop. I. 1769, No. 12.

ed. firstly, that the royal mint should be under the direct management of the crown, and should not be farmed out as before, and, secondly, that everyone who counterfeited coins should be punished with death. The Vazir too was informed of the scheme, and was asked to stop counterfeiting of coin in his dominions by the infliction of capital punishment on those who were guilty of this offence.¹²³ In addition to the 'farman,' prohibiting the export of specie from Bengal, previously granted,¹²⁴ the Emperor now issued a fresh 'farman' sanctioning capital punishment for the debasement or counterfeiting of coin, and intimated his decision to enforce the new currency strictly.¹²⁵ Agreeably to the Governor's advice, the management of the royal mint was taken away from the old lessees, and was put under the charge of a royal officer, Hisamuddin Ali Khan.¹²⁶

At their meeting of the 17th of June, the Council finally resolved¹²⁷ to enforce the scheme passed in their meeting of the 20th of March; and in accordance with the suggestion¹²⁸ of Muhammad Riza Khan and other ministers at Murshidabad they agreed to adopt the *Muhammad Shahi* Standard in preference to the *Venetian* Standard for the new currency. The *Muhammad Shahi* standard was preferred for the following reasons. Firstly, it approached nearest to the proportional value of gold and silver at that time. Secondly, it was better adapted for the purposes of exchange and currency. Thirdly, it had the general approval of the public in India. Fourthly, it had formerly been in vogue in Bengal, hence the tradition of long use was likely to make it more acceptable to the people.

¹²³ Cop. I. 1769, No. 11.

¹²⁴ Trans. R. 1768, No. 334 A.

¹²⁵ Trans. R. 1769, No. 64.

¹²⁶ Trans. R. 1769, No. 63.

¹²⁷ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 17, 1769.

¹²⁸ Cop. I. 1769, No. 27.

Lastly, some mohurs of this standard recently struck¹²⁰ in the mints of Patna, Murshidabad, and Dacca had met with a ready circulation. This acted as an additional inducement to the Council in their final decision.

The bimetallic scheme of 1769 was an improvement on that of 1766, inasmuch as the legal value now fixed was not so unduly above the market value as in 1766. Greater allowance was now made for the inevitable variation in the proportional value of the two metals, resulting from the continued drain of silver from the country. The mohur issued in 1766 had weighed 16 annas, or $179\frac{1}{2}$ grains, had been of the fineness of 20 cts., and had been issued at the denomination of 14 'sikkah' rupees. The new mohur on the other hand was to weigh 17 annas, or $190\frac{1}{2}$ grains,¹³⁰ was to be of the fineness of 23 cts. $3\frac{3}{4}$ grains,¹³¹ and was to be issued at the denomination of 16 'sikkah' rupees.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the authorities to avoid the principal errors of the previous scheme, the new currency too ended in failure¹³² for almost the same reasons. Evidently the authorities had not yet been able to collect the data on which they could have based a sound currency policy. This is apparent from the fact that the legal denomination of the new mohur still exceeded the market value by nearly six per cent.¹³³ With the artificial enhancement of the value of the

¹²⁰ Letter from Mr. C. Bentley, Assay-Master, to Mr. C. Floyer, Mint-Master, May 7, 1769. Letter from Mr. C. Floyer to the Governor and Council, May 8, 1769. (Beng. Pub. Cons., May 8, 1769.)

Letter from Mr. C. Bentley to Mr. C. Floyer, May 30, 1769. (Beng. Pub. Cons., May 30, 1769.)

¹³⁰ Verelst's View, etc., p. 103.

The weight, according to Sir James Steuart, was 190.773 grains.

¹³¹ Beng. Pub. Cons., June 17, 1769. Verelst's View, etc., p. 103.

¹³² In the beginning, however, the new mohurs passed at their denominational value. (*Vide* Verelst's View, etc., p. 103.) But, shortly afterwards, these did not find a ready circulation out of Calcutta, and in Calcutta, according to Shore's minute (September 29, 1796), these circulated for a number of years at a small discount.

¹³³ The over-valuation was variously estimated from 5.25 per cent to 5.71 per cent.

gold mohurs, the value of silver rupees naturally depreciated to the same extent. Thus, whatever silver there still remained in the market was driven out of circulation, while the gold coins issued from the mints could not suffice for the normal requirements of the country. In short, the effects of the old gold currency re-appeared in a less severe form. The most opulent among the 'sarrafs' and bankers found such difficulties in recovering the money they had formerly lent that they now preferred "locking up their fortunes in their treasure-chests to lending it!"¹³⁴ So great was the scarcity of silver that sufficient advance could not be made in 1769 even for the Company's investment, and the authorities feared that they might be forced ultimately to collect the revenues in kind. The people gradually withdrew even the available gold from the circulation from their natural distrust of the official policy. Under the scheme of 1766, the mohur had contained 149.72 grains of pure gold, and had been valued at 14 'sikkah' rupees, i.e., at the rate of 10.694 grains of pure gold to the rupee; and, according to the scheme of 1769, the mohur now contained 190.086 grains of pure gold, and was to pass for 16 'sikkah' rupees, i.e., at the rate of 11.88 grains of pure gold to the rupee. Such arbitrary enhancement of the legal denomination within a few years could hardly inspire confidence in the minds of the people who considered it safer to hold up their stock of gold, or sell it as bullion than to bring it to the mint for coinage, and thereby run the risk of future loss.

The well-meaning currency reform of Verelst's period was only of a palliative nature. The extreme scarcity of the current specie, which it was meant to remedy could not have been minimised without a total stoppage of the heavy drain¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Letter to Court, September 25, 1769.

¹³⁵ According to Verelst's estimate, the amount exported in silver by the English alone during the five years following the grant of the Diwani was £1,284,008. The total drain from various causes during 1757 to 1769 was no less than 13 millions sterling. (Verelst's View, etc., pp. 85-6) In 1769, it was roughly calculated that in the last three years bullion worth £624,375 or Rs. 5,550,000 had been imported, while the export of bullion

of silver from Bengal. That Verelst was sensible of this will be evident from his warning, "Bengal, like other subjected provinces, must yield its tribute; but experience will inculcate the necessity of moderating our demands, that the country may be enabled long to continue this payment."¹³⁰

and commodities had been ten times higher, the amount being £6,311,250 or Rs. 56,100,000. (Letter to Court, April 5, 1769.)

¹³⁰ Verelst's View, etc., p. 103.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF LAND REVENUE

The revenue administration in Bengal during the Governorship of Verelst is of the utmost significance, inasmuch as it reveals the peculiar problems and difficulties which arose from the introduction of the dual system of government after the acquisition of the Diwani. While the revenue system of this period has received an almost universal condemnation at the hands of historians, it has not been studied with the care it certainly deserves. Having justly achieved great distinction as supervisor¹ in turn of all the three districts ceded by Mir Qasim, Verelst was deservedly known to be one of the ablest revenue officials in Bengal even before his appointment as Governor. Both before and after assuming the office of Governor, he devoted an unwearied attention to the subject of the revenue administration, made "the completest and most authentic 'hustabood' investigation ever executed in Bengal,"² and sought to reform the abuses of an impracticable system with an earnestness and humanity which it would be unfair to ignore, despite his eventual failure.

The framework of the revenue system in Verelst's time was the same as had been established by his predecessor, but within this framework Verelst introduced, during his short

¹ Verelst took charge of Chittagong in the beginning of 1761, and quitted it in 1765 (Beng. Sel. Com., May 7, 1765). He took charge of Burdwan in 1765 (Beng. Sel. Com., June 21, 1765), and left next year owing to his transfer to Midnapur (Beng. Sel. Com., Dec. 20, 1765). At Midnapur, he remained only for a few months. Towards the close of 1766 he conducted his valuable inquiries into the revenues of the Calcutta lands, and in January, 1767, was appointed as a member of the Select Committee (Beng. Sel. Com., January 16, 1767). Vide also Verelst's View, etc., pp. 72—4.

² This is Grant's opinion with respect to Verelst's report on the Calcutta lands. (James Grant: Historical and Comparative Analysis. Fifth Report, Edited by Firminger, II, p. 425.) For Verelst's report on the Calcutta lands, vide Beng. Pub. Cons., April 29, 1767.

regime, a number of reforms which, but for the breakdown and subsequent abolition of the dual system itself, would have attracted much greater attention than it has so far received. It is no doubt true that Verelst saw no reason to alter the system which he inherited from his predecessor, but his adherence to it was due to an honest conviction that this system was the best that could have been enforced in the existing circumstances. Verelst appears to have believed that the indigenous institutions, if duly enforced, could still be made to work satisfactorily. This is why he deemed it essential in the interests both of the Company and the people to preserve the structure of the native government "as entire and unimpaired as possible."³ The futility of such a policy was, however, ultimately realised, and the Company had ultimately to declare its intention to stand forth as Diwan and throw off the mask of subservience. The sole importance of Verelst's reforms lies in the fact that they mark the transition between the early delegation of authority to the native agency and the final assumption of responsibility by the Company's own servants.

On the occasion of the very first 'Punyaha'⁴ attended by him as Governor, Verelst took steps to provide for the reformation of a number of glaring abuses in the collection of the revenues. The reforms in this connection, though of a minor character, serve to illustrate the zeal with which the Governor undertook the task of revenue reform. These may be summarised⁵ as follows:—

1. The settlement being too high in some cases, the balances happened to be large⁶ and recurred from year to year. As it was clear that the

³ Letter from the Governor, Beng. Pub. Cons., December 16, 1769.

⁴ The annual festival (usually held in May at Murshidabad) when the revenue settlement for the ensuing year was made.

⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., July 6, 1767.

Letter to Court, September 26, 1767.

⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., March 10, 1767, " . . . we are sorry to find such very considerable balances . . . the strictest inquiry should be made into the causes of such deficiency in the collections."

revenue of such over-rated lands could not be fully collected without causing "the greatest distress to the ryots and absolute ruin to the lands," reductions were allowed, and the over-rates were struck off. These over-rates, it may be noted, had previously been carried over year after year through the custom of never striking off from the rent-roll any sums which had once been brought on.

2. The heavy charges of the collections were substantially reduced, especially by the dismissal of the numerous rabble of troops maintained by the Faujdars and other officers of the government. More than two lakhs of rupees per annum were saved to the exchequer by means of such economies.⁷
3. The zamindars were strictly enjoined upon to promote the cultivation of their lands and afford every protection to the industrious ryots, and were at the same time cautioned that any misconduct on their part would meet with condign punishment. They were also directed to give every encouragement in their respective districts to the cultivation⁸ of the mulberry tree and the cotton

⁷ Mr. Sykes had already made considerable economies in the management of the Dacca province.

Beng. Sel. Com., April 18, 1767 and *Muzaffar-Namah* (Alld. Univ. MS.) p. 424.

⁸ Verelst took a special interest in the production of raw silk in Bengal. In 1769 he issued certain important regulation for the welfare of the silk trade (Beng. Pub. Cons., June 19, 1769). These may be thus summarised :—

- (i) No force was to be used in the purchase of silk goods.
- (ii) The goods were to be correctly weighed in the presence of the proprietor, and arbitrary impositions of the agents were to be stopped.
- (iii) Payments were to be made in the 'Sanwat' rupees, or an equitable *batta* was to be allowed for other coins.

plant for the benefit of the ryots. The ground rent on lands to be so cultivated was lowered in a proportion that was expected to make it more advantageous to the tenant to raise that kind of produce than any other.

4. To stop the confusion caused by the frequent change of the names of the districts in the revenue accounts, and prevent the frauds that might be concealed under such practices, the Governor strongly recommended to the ministers that one particular name should always be used to specify the same district. It was accordingly decided that the names used in the present year's estimate should remain unaltered in future.
 5. The practice of incorporating the outstanding balances of former years with the rents of the present year was found to be productive of many inconveniences. The frequent dismissal of the collectors, either on account of inefficiency or misconduct, rendered the outstanding balances heavier every year, and no collector could be easily available to accept the office under such conditions. It was decided, therefore, to keep the account of the balances apart, and enter into a separate agreement with the collector, whereby he made himself responsible for such balances as upon enquiry should appear equitable, or might be pointed out to him by the government,
- (iv) The Chief of Cossimbazar was to hear appeals and redress grievances and prevent undue harassment of the proprietors and winders.
 - (v) No presents were to be demanded from merchants on any pretence.
 - (vi) The overseers were to be prevented from oppressing the winders, and the latter were to be amply recompensed for their labours.
 - (vii) For the improvement of silkreeing, some Italian experts were imported in 1769. (Beng. Pub. Cons., November 13, 1770).

or by his predecessor in office. By this means the obvious inconvenience of combining the accounts of different years was avoided, and "a door" was "shut against the specious pretext for harassing and oppressing the landholders for the recovery of outstanding debts."

6. As it appeared⁹ to the Governor that large tracts of land had been alienated under the designation of 'jagirs' by force or fraud, or through inattention on the part of the government, it was decided to resume¹⁰ all such lands for the benefit of the exchequer. Orders were issued, directing all persons holding 'jagirs' to register sanads in the head cutcherry within six months to prove their rights and title; and it was further notified that the 'jagirs' would be continued only to ancient and respectable families, and to those who had just claims. It is interesting to note that Mr. Rumbold was directed to notify these orders in every district of Bihar by beat of tomtom.¹¹

Early in February, 1768, Mr. Sykes, Resident at the Durbar, brought¹² to the notice of the Governor and Select Committee the frauds and oppressions practised by the mercenary collectors, and reported, for example, that the district of Purnea was getting almost destitute of inhabitants and cultivation because of the extortions of the local officials. "I think it absolutely necessary," he wrote, "we recommend to the ministers that a severe example according to the laws of the country be made of the most notorious offenders as a

⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., April 9, 1767.

¹⁰ The Directors did not wholeheartedly approve of this measure. They thought it would appear "very ungracious" to resume the jagirs once granted by the government. (Letter from Court, November 11, 1768.)

¹¹ Letter to Mr. T. Rumbold, Chief at Patna, July 21, 1767. (Beng. Sel. Com., July 21, 1767.)

¹² Beng. Sel. Com., February 10, 1768.

Sensible of the heavy responsibility placed on the shoulders of Muhammad Riza Khan, Naib-Diwan, and because the latter had lately complained of his indigent health, the Governor recommended in February, 1768, the appointment of a deputy under him.¹³ For some time past, the Naib-Diwan had been assisted in the catcherry by a relation of his, named Fath Ali Khan, without any emolument. On the 16th of February, the Select Committee resolved¹⁴ to nominate the latter as 'Naib' of Muhammad Riza Khan. It is noteworthy that Fath Ali Khan's salary was subsequently fixed¹⁵ at the enormous sum of Rs. 7,000 a month at the suggestion of Mr. Sykes.¹⁶ This extra expenditure¹⁷ was allowed on the

¹³ Letter from Mr. F. Sykes, February 10, 1768.

¹⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., February 23, 1768.

¹⁵ Letter from Messrs J. Cantier and F. Sykes, July 1, 1768.
Beng. Sel. Com., July 23, 1768.

¹⁶ Letter to Court, February 9, 1768.

¹⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., February 16, 1768.

¹⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., July 23, 1768.

¹⁹ According to Mr. Sykes, Fath Ali Khan was a petron "of integrity, attention and abilities."

²⁰ The Directors were opposed to the payment of exorbitant salaries. They later objected to the big salary paid to Muhammad Riza Khan himself. Letter from Court, March 17, 1769.

ground that the appointment of a 'Naib' was necessary for an efficient control of the Diwani revenues.

In order to remove a long-felt grievance of the ministers that the work of revenue collection was frequently hampered by the Company's servants and their rapacious 'gumashtahs', the Select Committee resolved in July to inform²¹ Mr. Sykes that it was their determined resolution not to permit any servant of the Company to interfere with the ministers in the collection of the revenues.

Another desirable reform introduced at this time was the disallowance²² of the time-honoured practice of the ministers to hold lands in their own names. The authorities directed Mr. Sykes to represent to the latter the obvious impropriety of their holding lands under the country government. This practice was accordingly discontinued.

One of the principal defects of the revenue system of this period was the over-assessment of many areas, due primarily to the lack²³ of an exact knowledge of their real value. From the outset, Verelst had been cognisant²⁴ of the fact that it was impossible to fix the just value of the lands until a complete measurement was made thereof, and their gross produce fully ascertained. This is why he took an active interest in the work of survey, and encouraged Captain James Rennell, Surveyor General,²⁵ to complete his survey of Bengal and form one general chart²⁶ from those already made by him and his assistants.²⁷ In consideration of the valuable work of the

²¹ Letter to Mr. F. Sykes, July 23, 1768.

²² Letter to Court, September 13, 1768.

²³ Bolts: Considerations on India Affairs, p. 161.

²⁴ Beng. Pub. Cons., April 29, 1767.

²⁵ He had been appointed to the newly created post of Surveyor General by an order of January 1, 1767.

²⁶ Rennell: Memoir of a Map of Hindustan, 1783.

²⁷ Verelst appointed three other assistants besides Ensign William Richards, viz., Captain Lewis DuGloss, Captain John Adams, and Lt. Carter.

youthful²⁸ Surveyor General, his salary was increased to Rs. 300 per month.²⁹ At his request,³⁰ more assistants were allowed to him, and a larger number of menial staff was sanctioned,³¹ for the Governor rightly held that the survey of a country, "the greatest part of which affords not the least conveniency to an European," was bound to be expensive, but, as he had already written to the Directors in March 1768, "the benefit of such an undertaking will be an ample compensation for the charges that are attendant upon it".³²

That the work of survey in those days was neither safe nor easy would be apparent from the fact that during one of his surveying tours Captain Rennell was severely assaulted³³ by a party of 'Sannyasis,' as a result of which he received several serious cuts³⁴ from their broadswords. 'Parvanahs' were, therefore, issued³⁵ by the Governor to the gumashtahs of all the Faujdars, Amils, and Zamindars of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, directing them to afford the surveyors every possible assistance. The zamindars were warned³⁶ that if they obstructed the surveyors in their work, they would be severely punished, and dispossessed of their lands. On being informed that the Zamindar of Jessore had refused to assist Captain Rennell, the Governor appears to have directed³⁷ Muhammad Riza Khan to summon the zamindar forthwith and punish him severely so that it might be a lesson to others.

²⁸ At the time of his appointment as Surveyor General, he was only 21 years of age.

²⁹ Letter to Court, March 30, 1767.

³⁰ Letter from Rennell, October 2, 1768.

³¹ Beng. Pub. Cons., October 11, 1768.

³² Letter to Court, March 28, 1768.

³³ Vide Captain James Rennell's Journal, published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and edited by Mr. T. H. D. La Touche, 1910. Rennell's Journal unfortunately ends on March 23, 1767.

³⁴ Letter to Court, March 30, 1768, "... the desperate wounds he has lately received have already left him but a shattered constitution." Once Rennell was attacked by a leopard which mauled five of his party, and was eventually killed by him with a bayonet thrust.

³⁵ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 68.

³⁶ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 53.

³⁷ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 85.

It is interesting to find that zamindars often complained that the collection of the revenues was greatly interrupted³⁸ by survey operations.

Despite the issue of the official 'Parvanahs,' the surveyors were often badly treated by the hostile zamindars and high-handed Faujdars. For example, early in January, 1768, the Governor complained³⁹ to Muhammad Riza Khan that Captain Rennell had lately been insulted by the Raja of Behar and the Faujdar of Rungpur, while engaged in his survey of the boundaries of Bengal. In spite of all such difficulties, the work of survey was vigorously pushed on, and by the end of 1768 the survey of the boundaries was completed.⁴⁰ An officer was also deputed to survey the districts contiguous to the Orissa coast, and letters⁴¹ were written by the Governor to Bhavani Pandit, Maratha Governor of Cuttack, and to the Raja of Mourbhanj, requesting them to give the surveyor necessary assistance, and prevent all casual interruptions in his business. Verelst's term of office was thus marked by a rapid progress in the work of survey.

The evils⁴² of the farming system formed one of the worst features of the revenue administration of this period, but it has usually been ignored that Verelst was probably the first man who raised his voice of protest⁴³ against the iniquity of short leases. While supervisor at Burdwan, he had realised the harmful consequences of this policy, and had, on his own initiative, introduced long leases⁴⁴ which he rightly considered to be essential to the success of the farming system. But, in the Diwani lands the revenues were settled annually on the

³⁸ Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 136.

³⁹ Abs. I. 1766-71, No. 6.

⁴⁰ Letter to Court, March 28, 1768.

⁴¹ Trans. I. 1766-67, Nos. 232-3.

⁴² Letter to Court, November 3, 1772.

John Shore, Minute, June 18, 1789, etc., etc.

⁴³ Beng. Sel. Com., September 14, 1765.

⁴⁴ Verelst's View, etc., pp. 70-1.

occasion of the 'Punyaha,' hence Verelst's plan of long-term leases could not be generally introduced. In consequence, the lands subject to the amils who were liable to be changed from year to year, and as such were no better than the worst farmers, were mercilessly rack-rented,⁴⁵ and impoverished. It is notable that towards the close of his administration Verelst enforced the three years' farming plan in Purnea⁴⁶ with good results. In this he was ably supported⁴⁷ by Mr. Becher who had been appointed⁴⁸ Resident at the Durbar after the retirement of Mr. Sykes. Encouraged by the success of the experiment at Purnea, Mr. Becher strongly urged the adoption of this plan in every district of Bengal, "with all the expedition that prudence will allow of."⁴⁹ The retirement of Verelst and the subsequent famine postponed the general enforcement of the plan, and it was not until the advent of Western Hastings that the policy of long-lease system was once again officially recognised.⁵⁰

Arbitrary assessment⁵¹ under the designation of '*Mathaut*'⁵² constituted an additional burden on the ryots during this period. The '*Mathaut*,'⁵³ it may be noted, was a general name for all extra demands made for defraying certain special

⁴⁵ Letter from Mr. Becher, May 24, 1769. Dow: History of Hindostan, I, p. cxxxiv. Bolis, *op. cit.*, p. 150, etc. Verelst's View, etc., p. 75, etc.

⁴⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., September 25, 1769.

⁴⁷ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, August 26, 1769.

⁴⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., January, 4, 1769.

⁴⁹ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, September 22, 1769. (Bengal Sel. Com. October 12, 1769.)

⁵⁰ Calcutta Committee of Revenue Consultations, May 14, 1772.

⁵¹ Further Report from the Committee of Secrecy, 1773.

⁵² It is interesting to note that Sykes was later nicknamed 'Squire Matoot' with reference to the '*Mathaut*' tax levied by him. (*Vide* Holzman: The Nabobs in England.)

⁵³ It was "one of the most ancient locally universal imposts," and caused an increase of about one and a half rupee on each hundred of the '*Asāl Jama*.' *Vide* Grant, *op. cit.*

expenses, e.g., for the presentation of robes of honour, etc.,⁵⁴ on the occasion of the 'Punyaha' ('*Khalat Baha*'), the repairing⁵⁵ of bridges and river banks ('*Pooshtebundy*'), the payment of a customary fee⁵⁶ to the Nazir and the Mutasaddis of the Cutcherry ('*Rasum Nazarat*'), or the maintenance of the State elephants ('*Fil Khanah*'). The '*Mathaut*' was exacted from the ryots in addition to the normal revenue, probably because the authorities feared⁵⁷ that the Directors might not sanction the aforesaid expenses⁵⁸ of "an ancient standing."⁵⁹ That this was an entirely vexatious taxation

⁵⁴ The amounts collected under this head during Verelst's period were as follows :—

1767-68	...	Rs. 2,63,139—12—0
1768-69	...	Rs. 3,24,247—11—10
1769-70	...	Rs. 3,02,878—3—0

(*Vide Beng. Sel. Com., April 28, 1770.*)

⁵⁵ The amounts collected under this head during Verelst's period were as follows :—

1767-68	...	Rs. 1,48,975—9—18—3
1768-69	...	Rs. 2,13,165—12—17—3
1769-70	...	Rs. 2,10,547—16—10—2

(*Vide Beng. Sel. Com., April 28, 1770.*)

⁵⁶ The amounts collected under this head during Verelst's period were as follows :—

1767-68	...	Rs. 1,12,989—12—18
1768-69	...	Rs. 1,76,532—13—10
1769-70	...	Rs. 1,57,243—7—2

(*Vide Beng. Sel. Com., April 28, 1770.*)

⁵⁷ Letter from Mr. F. Sykes to Mr. R. Becher, January 16, 1769.

(*Vide Beng. Sel. Com., April 28, 1770.*)

⁵⁸ A few more '*Mathaut*' cesses were officially collected in different districts, for example, the '*Mathaut Palataka*' to make good deficiencies in the collections occasioned by desertion. (*Vide Bengal District Records, Rangpur, I, p. iii.*) Some '*Mathaut*' cesses were clandestinely levied by the collectors for their own benefit. (*Vide Further Report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773.*)

⁵⁹ Letter from Sykes to Warren Hastings, November 8, 1773. (*Vide Weitzman, Warren Hastings and Philip Francis, p. 205.*)

was, however, fully realised. After his appointment as Resident at the Durbar, Mr. Beecher strongly urged⁰⁰ the Governor to put a stop to such exactions, and vehemently condemned the present destructive scheme of adding demand upon demand under the name of 'Mathaut' on the ground that this was one of the principal causes of the distressed state of the country. "I wish," he wrote, "the word (*i.e.* 'Mathaut') could be abolished and never heard of more."⁰¹ Verelst too was anxious to abolish these arbitrary demands, and, at his instance, the Select Committee even agreed⁰² to forbid the levy of the 'Mathaut' in future. This decision, however, could not be immediately enforced. The reform was eventually carried out by Warren Hastings.⁰³

While it is true that⁰⁴ the land revenue was collected with the utmost strictness, and that the revenue demand had been considerably enhanced⁰⁵ after the assumption of the Diwani, Verelst, be it said to his credit, was always opposed to the policy of increasing the revenue, and did recommend and enforce substantial abatements⁰⁰ in 1769. Being a cautious

⁰⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.

⁰¹ Letter from Mr. R. Beecher, May 24, 1769.

⁰² Beng. Sel. Com., August 16, 1769.

⁰³ Calcutta Committee of Revenue Consultations, May, 14, 1772.

⁰⁴ Letter from Mr. R. Beecher, May 24, 1769.

Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.

⁰⁵ Clive, it must be pointed out, had objected to a further increase of the revenues. On April 25, 1766, he wrote to Mr. Palk, "To attempt farther increase of the revenues will be drawing the knot too tight." On September 22, he wrote similarly to Mr. Blomer, "The Company's revenues are already immense; nor can I think of increasing them by the least oppressive mode." Even at the time of his departure, he advised the Select Committee "not to be very desirous of increasing the revenues, especially where it can only be effected by oppressing the landholders and tenants." (*Vide* Clive's Minute, Beng. Sel. Com., January 16, 1767.)

⁰⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769. (*Vide* Letter from Messrs Verelst and Beecher, June 30, 1769.) The following abatements may be cited:—

In Rajshahi	...	Rs. 93,602	15	13
„ Dacca	...	„ 26,350	0	0
„ Birbhum	...	„ 86,879	3	10
„ Rajmahal	...	„ 12,140	0	0

financier, he could not forget that an unduly rapid increase in the revenue demand was bound to prove detrimental to the ultimate interests of the government itself. He firmly believed⁶⁷ that any increase in the revenues should arise only from the prevention of frauds and embezzlements, or from the growth of the population and the improvement of agriculture.⁶⁸ "Permit me," he wrote⁶⁹ to the Directors in 1768, "to give you my most serious opinion, founded on almost nineteen years' experience in the various branches of your revenues, and in various districts of your possessions, that it is totally beyond the power of your administration to make any material addition to your rents, or remit a single rupee in specie home."

The Directors themselves did not desire⁷⁰ the revenues to be enhanced in a manner that might prove oppressive to the people, but their insistent demand for a steady increase in the investments without any corresponding export of specie from England, coupled with the heavy drain of silver from Bengal forced the authorities to raise the collections even against their own will. In vain did Verelst and the Resident at the Durbar protest⁷¹ against the enforced increase of the collections.⁷² The exigencies of the situation⁷³ demanded immediate⁷⁴ rather than future increase of the revenue. The extent to which the

⁶⁷ Beng. Pub. Cons., February 22, 1768.

⁶⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., July 23, 1768.

⁶⁹ Letter to Court, September 26, 1768.

⁷⁰ Letter from Court, November 20, 1767.

⁷¹ Beng. Sel. Com., October 12, 1769.

total collections had to be gradually raised during Verelst's period will be apparent from the following figures⁷⁵ :—

	Gross collections	Net Revenue
May 1765	£. 2,258,227	£. 1,681,427
to	or	or
April 1766	Rs. 200,73,133	Rs. 149,46,024
May 1766	£. 3,805,817	£. 2,527,594
to	or	or
April 1767	Rs. 338,29,494	Rs. 224, 67,500
May 1767	£. 3,608,009	£. 2,359,005
to	or	or
April 1768	Rs. 320,71,195	Rs. 209,68,937
May 1768	£. 3,787,207	£. 2,402,191
to	or	or
April 1769	Rs. 336,64,072	Rs. 213,52,805
May 1769	£., 3,341,976	£. 2,039,368
to	or	or
April 1770	Rs. 297,06,976	Rs. 185,72,159

No account of Verelst's revenue policy can be complete without some mention of the reforms introduced by him in the Calcutta lands, and the three ceded districts which yielded a substantial proportion of the total revenues of Bengal. In fact, Verelst's work in this sphere is in some respects of greater importance than the revenue measures adopted for the Diwani lands. Such was the success of the reforms in the ceded lands that Verelst could claim⁷⁶ with justifiable pride that the

⁷⁵ Verelst's View, etc., p. 82.

Lord Clive: Speech in the House of Commons, 1772, p. 52.

John Hoole: The Present State of the English East India Company's Affairs, 1772, p. 73, etc.

Fourth Report, 1773, p. 535.

Warren Hastings's Statement (*vide* Forrest's Selections, Vol. II, p. 23).

James Grant: Historical and Comparative Analysis of the Finances of Bengal.

John Shore: Minute, June 18, 1789 (*vide* Fifth Report, Vol. II.)

⁷⁶ Verelst's View, etc., p. 75.

condition of these lands formed so striking a contrast⁷⁷ to that of the other parts of Bengal, where oppression and rack-rent prevailed, that foreigners as well as Indians eagerly wished for a more extensive application of those reforms. Besides, it is in these ceded lands that Verelst had acquired as supervisor that experience in revenue administration, which later enabled him, when Governor, to formulate a comprehensive policy for the reform of the revenue administration of those lands.

The reforms which were introduced by Verelst in the ceded and Calcutta lands may be summarised as follows :—

1. A better system⁷⁸ was substituted for that of "an outcry." The oppressive auction system was stopped, and "men of substance and character" were induced to take charge of the collections "with a promise that if they exerted themselves in the improvement, they should never be dispossessed," for Verelst was convinced that short leases could attract only "rapacious wretches" who paid no regard to anything but "the enriching themselves at the expense and to the detriment of the industrious Ryots."
2. A moderate rent was fixed not only to prevent heavy balances, but also to encourage the cultivation. As far as possible, the rent was estimated from the gross produce of the lands.
3. The increase⁷⁹ of '*Bazi Zamin*' or charity lands⁸⁰ due mainly to "the villainy of the black servants"⁸¹ was checked by a proper scrutiny of the

⁷⁷ *Ibid* p. 72. The ceded districts were "the most flourishing" districts of the province.

⁷⁸ Verelst's View, etc., p. 67.

⁷⁹ Letter from Mr. Hugh Watts, February 11, 1767. (Beng. Pub. Cons., February 16, 1767.)

⁸⁰ According to Bolts (*op. cit.*, p. 161) nearly one-fifth part of the total lands in Burdwan had been fraudulently alienated under the name of '*Pazi Zamin*.'

⁸¹ Beng. Pub. Cons., April 29, 1767. (*Vide* Minute of the Governor on the Calcutta lands).

sanads⁸² and claims. The lands which were not actually appropriated to religious and charitable purposes, or were held without proper sanads were resumed.

4. Many of the 'Ryotty' lands⁸³ which had formerly been fraudulently shown in the cutcherry books as uncultivated areas were upon examination found to be cultivated, and as such were brought to the credit of the exchequer.
5. The lands held by the servants in office and their dependents were no longer allowed to be held at the low rate formerly in vogue. Verelst saw no necessity for douceurs, where every man employed by the Company received his monthly allowance.
6. The Europeans were no longer allowed to hold farms⁸⁴ on their own account, or in the name of their dependents. This reform was necessitated by the disclosure⁸⁵ of the fact that Messrs Johnstone, Hay, and Bolts had, during the administration of Clive, monopolised the best of the farms in Burdwan among themselves on very advantageous terms, as few or no bidders dared to bid for the lands which they knew had been chosen by those gentlemen. It is noteworthy that the Directors themselves had asked for this reform.⁸⁶

⁸² The Sanads were very strictly scrutinised. *Vide* Bengal District Records, Chittagong, l. pp. 89, 97, etc.

⁸³ Lands cultivated by tenants resident on the spot, and distinct from such lands as the 'Khas,' the 'Khamar,' the 'Nankar,' the 'Chakaran,' the 'Jagir' lands, etc. (*Vide* Verelst's View, etc., pp. 69—71).

⁸⁴ The Directors themselves had formerly allowed their servants to bid at the public sale of the Calcutta lands. Letter from Court, March 13, 1731.

⁸⁵ Letter to Court, April 10, 1767.

⁸⁶ Letter from Court, May 17, 1766. (*Vide* Beng. Sel. Com., January 16, 1767.)

7. The practice of the 'mutasaddis' to hold the most profitable lands "at an under-rate" was also put an end to, as it was their interest "not only to keep us ignorant but also to deceive us in points of the greatest consequence."⁸⁷ Nobody holding any post was allowed to hold a farm, except for a small piece of land necessary for the maintenance of his family. All such 'mutasaddis' as held large quantities of land were obliged to quit them, or their offices. In this connection, it is noticeable that the Council rejected the joint offer of Raja Nobokissen (Naba Krishna) and Gokul Ghosal to farm the Calcutta towns for three years at 13 lakhs of rupees per annum on the ground that the Raja's high office⁸⁸ gave him so great an influence in the country that "the ryots might be alarmed and apprehensive of oppression."⁸⁹
8. To prevent frauds and embezzlement,⁹⁰ 'pattahs' or leases were granted⁹¹ to the tenants. The amount of rent which each tenant was to pay was shown in the 'pattah.' A register of these leases was kept in English.
9. The cultivation of the mulberry tree was encouraged⁹² by the assessment of the mulberry plantations at

⁸⁷ Verelst's View, etc., p. 217.

⁸⁸ Originally a Persian tutor and *munshi*, Nabakrishna was appointed to the important office of the Company's political 'banyan' on the 16th of January, 1767, at the instance of Lord Clive. (Beng. Sel. Com., January 16, 1767.) He was also the President of the caste tribunal of the Hindus. (Verelst's View, etc., p. 27.) Bolts is mistaken in referring to him as banyan' to the Governor. (Bolts, *op. cit.*, p. 95).

⁸⁹ Beng. Pub. Cons., August 20, 1767. For the application of Naba-krishna and Gokul Ghosal, *vide* O. C., August 20, No. 1.

⁹⁰ Embezzlements were not uncommon. *Vide* Bengal District Records, Midnapur, I, p. 175, etc.

⁹¹ Beng. Pub. Cons., April 29, 1767.

⁹² Beng. Pub. Cons., February 16, 1767, &c.

a reduced rent, and waste lands were granted on very favourable terms for this purpose.⁹³

10. To ascertain the true value of the lands, surveyors were appointed to measure them, and note the quantity of land each tenant held.⁹⁴

11. The collection of additional cesses and 'abvabs' was regularly and strictly scrutinised to prevent the impositions of the 'mutasaddis' and the oppression of the farmers.⁹⁵

The Ceded and Calcutta lands being directly under the management of the Company's servants were free from the oppression of the amils employed in the Diwani lands, while as a result of the regulations established by Verelst, these were more prosperous,⁹⁶ and better cultivated.⁹⁷ This is why the revenues of these lands could be increased without imposing an undue burden on the people. A statement as to net revenues⁹⁸ obtained from these lands during Verelst's period is given below:—

BURDWAN

May to April	Cash received	Current Rupees
1766-1767	4,288,171
1767-1768	4,149,471
1768-1769	4,158,387
1769-1770	3,948,037

⁹³ Vide Bengal District Records, Midnapur, II, pp. 55-6, 60, 77, 89, etc., and Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.

⁹⁴ Beng. Pub. Cons., April 29, 1767.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., August 16, 1769.

⁹⁷ "The province of Burdwan exhibits the face of a garden, whilst the more fertile provinces of Bengal are declining." Vide Verelst's Minute, Beng. Sel. Com., August 11, 1769.

⁹⁸ Verelst's View, etc., pp. 72-4.

MIDNAPUR

May to April	Cash received	Current Rupees
1766-1767	1,005,882
1767-1768	884,390
1768-1769	975,051
1769-1770	902,149

CHITTAGONG

May to April	Cash received	Current Rupees
1766-1767	378,330
1767-1768	422,766
1768-1769	432,540
1769-1770	398,835

THE CALCUTTA LANDS

May to April	Cash received	Current Rupees
1766-1767	801,571
1767-1768	1,116,395
1768-1769	1,030,464
1769-1770	1,022,845

While the Ceded and Calcutta lands were in a flourishing state, the condition of the Diwani lands was admittedly deplorable mainly on account of the abuses of the revenue administration. The Diwani revenues were in themselves a perplexing subject, and the Indian collectors who alone could have supplied any authentic information found it profitable⁹⁹ to conceal their knowledge. Besides, most of the old records

⁹⁹ Grant holds that "the actual system of revenue in Bengal was from the beginning (1765) taken upon mistaken grounds." "It is," he says, "a baseless fabric reared in ignorance, corruption, chicanery of the natives, intended to conceal from superficial popular view, or perhaps ultimately to destroy the symmetry, convenience, and simplicity of the outward structure." According to Grant, Muhammad Riza Khan himself was "a wholesale plunderer." (Grant, *op. cit.*)

had either been burnt, or carried away¹⁰⁰ by Mir Qasim during his flight from Bengal. Thus, without an accurate survey of the country, which was bound to take time, a just valuation of the lands was impossible. Conjectural, hence frequently excessive estimates had therefore to be adopted with unfortunate consequences, and the balances too were often so heavy that they could not be recovered without oppression.

Despite stringent measures¹⁰¹ taken against the oppressive amils and faujdars, their rapacity¹⁰² could not be effectively checked. The zamindars had a permanent interest in their lands, and, as such, could not oppress their tenants beyond certain limits, but when they proved defaulters, amils or collectors were sent to collect the revenue. And, as only the man who offered to collect most¹⁰³ was generally appointed, the amil, having no natural interest in the country placed under his charge, and being uncertain of his office, was bound to rack the country, and enrich¹⁰⁴ himself by all possible means. The check on such amils or their staff appointed by themselves could hardly be effective. The oppressed tenants were in most cases too poor to quit¹⁰⁵ their homes and seek justice

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, "When Cossim Ali fled from Patna, he carried with him or burnt all the records that could lead to a knowledge of former transactions."

(Beng. Sel. Com., February 9, 1769.) It may be pointed out here that Grant did not believe the story of Mir Qasim's having destroyed or carried all the records of the exchequer, for he suspected that the story might have been invented by the local officers to prevent detection of their own embezzlements. (*Vide* Grant, *op. cit.*)

¹⁰¹ *Mazaffar-Namah* (Allahabad University MS.), p. 439.

¹⁰² "Rogues and Plunderers." (Beng. Sel. Com., October 12, 1769.)

¹⁰³ Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.

Bolts, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

Dow, *op. cit.*, p. cxxiii, etc.

¹⁰⁴ Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 82.

Trans. I. 1766-68, No. 82. A.

¹⁰⁵ According to Becher, "Much these poor wretches will bear rather than quit their habitations to come here to complain." (Letter from Mr. R. Becher, May 24, 1769.) *Vide* also Dow, *op. cit.*, p. cxxv. According to *Mazaffar-Namah* (Alld. Univ. MS.), p. 437, the ryots sometimes fled from their villages in sheer despair.

at Murshidabad. There was no fixed '*hast-o-bud*' according to which the amils were to collect. Arbitrary and illegal demands were thus made with impunity, as there was no risk of complaint till more was demanded of the poor tenants than they could possibly pay. The long train of '*gumashtahs*,' '*dallals*,' '*paikars*,' '*pykes*,' '*barqandazes*,' and other subordinates employed in the work of collections combined to perpetuate a thousand modes of oppression and taxation,¹⁰⁶ and, in the words¹⁰⁷ of Verelst, "fattened on the spoils of the industrious ryot." The amil system was, in short, the worst source¹⁰⁸ of oppression in the post-Diwani period.

The resumption of the charity lands re-acted adversely on the economic condition of the people, as a large number of people were suddenly reduced to beggary.¹⁰⁹ Such was the misery of the former holders of the charity lands that they were obliged to pay the revenue by selling their necessary households goods, or even by pawning their children.¹¹⁰ The plight of such people was aggravated by the strictness with which the collections were kept up, and by the exactions of the collectors who freely oppressed the '*aimmahdars*' in particular to raise the revenue.

The administration of the revenue was further complicated during this period by the anomalous and unscientific character of the silver currency. As no two mints struck coins of a uniform fineness or weight, no actual coin could be treated as the standard coin. In consequence, a nominal coin, called the current rupee, was invented, by which the numerous types of rupees were valued by the '*Sarrafs*.' Besides, a varying rate

¹⁰⁶ Letter from Mr. G. G. Ducarel to Mr. R. Becher, August 17, 1769. Beng. Sel. Com., October 12, 1769. Verelst's View, etc., p. 66. Fourth Report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773. Bolts, op. cit., p. 155. Dow, op. cit., p. cxxvi, etc., etc.

¹⁰⁷ Verelst's View, etc., p. 75.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, May 24, 1769. (Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.)

¹⁰⁹ *Siyar*, (Lucknow Text), p. 828.

¹¹⁰ *Muzaffar-Namah* (Alld. Univ. MS.), p. 438.

of 'batta' was charged on the 'sikkahs' which were triennially recoined, and as the ryots had to pay¹¹¹ the revenue in the newly coined 'sikkahs,' of which a sufficient quantity obviously could never be available, they had to pay an additional 'batta' for paying the revenue in rupees of previous years. The 'batta,' therefore, considerably added to the burden¹¹² of the tenants. The latter had to receive payment for their produce in coins whose value they could not understand, and when they paid those very coins for rent, their value was deducted according to a calculation¹¹³ which they were too ignorant to grasp. The issue of gold coinage to make up the deficiency caused by the export of silver only made matters worse. Although the tenants were encouraged¹¹⁴ to pay the revenue in gold mohurs, the experiment did not succeed owing to the over-valuation of the mohurs, and Verelst appears to have warned the Directors more than once that the revenues might have to be collected in kind for sheer want of the current specie.

The rebellious conduct¹¹⁵ of the zamindars both of Bihar and Bengal¹¹⁶ was a constant source of trouble during Verelst's regime. Whenever a zamindar proved contumacious, or created disturbances, he had to be dismissed¹¹⁷ at once, and

¹¹¹ Dow. op. cit., p. cxxxiv.

¹¹² Bolis, op. cit., pp. 167—9.

¹¹³ Verelst's View, etc., p. 194.

Bolis, op. cit., p. 157.

Muzaffar-Namah (Alld. Univ. Ms.), p. 447, etc., etc.

¹¹⁴ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, May 5, 1769.

¹¹⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., February 10, 1768.

¹¹⁶ In ceded districts too the zamindars were sometimes rebellious, as in Midnapur where detachments had to be frequently sent against "the naked ill-fed and undisciplined savages" employed by the rebel landlords. "It was all a joke," the Resident once wrote, "to talk of licking these jungle fellows." Vide Bengal District Records, Midnapur, I, pp. 97, 99, 100, 102, 106, etc., and II, pp. 70, 78, 79, etc.

¹¹⁷ Cop. I. 1766—67, No. 129.

Trans. R. 1767—68, No. 290.

such dismissals were not infrequent in those days. The fact incidentally reveals that the zamindars were not supposed to possess an inherent right to their lands. In cases of default too, the zamindars were deprived of their rights. When ancient zamindaris were taken over by the Government, as in the case of Nadia in 1769, the zamindar was granted a special subsistence allowance¹¹⁸ as an extraordinary favour. Even Rani Bhavani, one of the premier zamindars of Bengal, had to be warned in Verelst's time that she would be deprived of her right as zamindar in case of deficiency in the revenue.¹¹⁹

It was not easy, however, to control the powerful zamindars, such as those of Bihar, and military force had to be used against them at times. In March, 1767, Mr. Rumbold reported¹²⁰ that nothing but force could ensure the collection of the revenues in Bihar, and complained that three 'parganah' battalions¹²¹ were not adequate for the purpose of keeping the zamindars in check. An additional battalion had accordingly to be raised¹²² for the service of the Bihar collections. Within a few months further military assistance was requisitioned¹²³ by Shitab Ray for the chastisement of the zemindars of Sherghati, Siris, Cushina, Charkanwan, etc., who were not only in a state of rebellion themselves, but had incited others to sedition and revolt.¹²⁴

Early in January, 1768, the aforesaid zamindars were stated by Shitab Ray to have formed a general association, with a

¹¹⁸ Letter from Messrs Verelst and Becher, June 30, 1769. (Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.)

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, March 18, 1767. (Beng. Sel. Com., March 27, 1768.)

¹²¹ A special force created by Clive to enforce the collection of revenue. (For details, *vide* Capt. Williams: *An Historical Account of the Bengl Native Infantry.*)

¹²² Letter to Court, September 26, 1768.

¹²³ Trans. I. 1766—67, No. 221.

¹²⁴ Trans. R. 1768, No. 17.

body of 5000 horse and foot.¹²⁵ These irregular troops the zamindars employed in filling their lands with tumult and depredation,¹²⁶ and in committing the most flagrant enormities in defiance of the 'parganah' battalions.¹²⁷ In order to stamp out this insurrection, Shitab Ray had to go to the disordered parganahs in person, while Captain Goddard was deputed by Mr. Rumbold with six companies and a field piece to overawe the rebel zamindars.¹²⁸ The district of Saran was in utter confusion owing to the revolt of the zamindars of Halsipur and other places, and the collections were totally stopped.¹²⁹ Shitab Ray reported in March, 1768, that the fort of Tuppah-Newan, belonging to a rebel zamindar, had been fruitlessly besieged by Captain Warren with a company of sepoy and a body of Hindustani horse for the last one month and a half. "The fort still holds out," he wrote, "and the zamindars have risen to the height of rebellion and insolence, interpreting this ill-success to their own wishes and flattering themselves with notions of superiority. They have thus entirely ruined a country yielding nine lakhs, and destroyed all sources of revenue in Saran."¹³⁰

Taking advantage of the widespread disturbances in Bihar, the Gurkha Chiefs of Nepal and the wandering 'nagas' and 'Sannyasis' descended in large numbers and marched in parties over the plains, plundering and laying waste whatever fell in their way.¹³¹ All the four 'parganah' battalions stationed in Bihar had therefore to be dispersed¹³² in companies,

¹²⁵ Trans. R. 1768, No. 18.

¹²⁶ Trans. R. 1768, No. 19.

¹²⁷ Trans. R. 1768, No. 21.

¹²⁸ Trans. R. 1768, No. 28.

¹²⁹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 89.

¹³⁰ Trans. R. 1768, No. 90.

¹³¹ Trans. R. 1768, No. 132.

¹³² Trans. R. 1768, No. 137.

and Shitab Ray repeatedly represented that a bigger force¹³³ was needed to quell the recurring disturbances in different parts of the provinces.¹³⁴ The rebel zamindars were eventually deprived of most of their forts,¹³⁵ but that the trouble was not fully over even after several months' fighting¹³⁶ is revealed from Mr. Rumbold's letter¹³⁷ of the 20th of September, wherein he complains that the forts of Palamau and Ramgarh being still in the hands of the insurgents, the revenues of the adjacent country could not be collected, as the latter disturbed the country in the harvest season, and, when pursued, would take shelter in those forts.

Of the oppressive character of the revenue administration in the Diwani lands, the authorities were fully aware,¹³⁸ but, so long as the dual system of government was to remain in force, they were indeed powerless to redress grievances, or effect any radical improvements. Persons of character had been employed in the work of collections, but, as the Select Committee confessed¹³⁹ with regret, "Fear, reward, severity, and indulgence, have all failed, and ended in a short political forbearance, or additional acts of dishonesty and rapine." The Resident at the Durbar, whose duty¹⁴⁰ it was to check abuses and prevent oppression, could not restrain single-

133 Mr. Rumbold urged that the 'parganah' battalions were not "sufficient for the service required." *Vide* Letter from Mr. T. Rumbold, August 20, 1768, (Beng. Sel. Com., August 31, 1768.)

134 Trans. R. 1768, No. 294.

135 Trans. R. 1768, No. 196.

Abs. I. 1766—71, No. 77.

136 Beng. Sel. Com., July 23, 1768.

137 Beng. Sel. Com., October 6, 1768.

138 Beng. Sel. Com., February 10, 1768.

Beng. Sel. Com., January 4, 1769.

Letter to Court, September 30, 1769, etc., etc.

139 Beng. Sel. Com., August 16, 1769.

140 Beng. Sel. Com., January 24, 1767.

Letter from Court, May 17, 1766.

handed¹⁴¹ "the depredations of hungry collectors"¹⁴² who practised "their native oppressions over a timid, servile, and defenceless people."¹⁴³ His want of time and ignorance,¹⁴⁴ and too indirect information through ministerial channels, in addition to his anxiety to prevent losses in the revenue from prolonged enquiries placed the oppressors beyond his reach. "The mildness of European manners introduced by our influence at the Durbar," suggests Verelst, "perhaps aggravated the mischief by removing in some sort the restraint of fear."¹⁴⁵ It was because Verelst was thoroughly convinced of the iniquity of the existing system that he ultimately proposed the institution of English Supervisors in every district—a policy which, notwithstanding its subsequent failure, bears testimony to the Governor's reforming zeal, no less than to his warm-hearted sympathy for the oppressed ryots of Bengal.

¹⁴¹ Dow rightly points out that for one man who knew very little of the language, manners, and opinions of the people, it was wellnigh impossible to prevent the frauds and oppressions rampant throughout the country. (*Vide* Dow, *op. cit.*, p. cxxxiv.) It may be pointed out here that owing "to the importance and extent of the business of each department," the Chiefship of Cossimbazar and the post of the Resident at the Durbar which had formerly been combined were separated under instructions from the Directors. (*Vide* Letter from Court, November 20, 1767.)

¹⁴² Verelst's View, etc., p. 66

¹⁴³ Beng. Sci. Com., August 16, 1769.

Verelst held that "the servility of the people must be removed before oppression can be eradicated." (*Vide* his farewell letter to the Council, Beng. Pub. Cons., December 16, 1769.)

¹⁴⁴ *Siyar* (Lucknow Text), pp. 826—7.

¹⁴⁵ Verelst's View, etc., p. 75.

CHAPTER XII

THE PLAN OF SUPERVISORSHIPS

The appointment of the English Supervisors for the Diwani portion of Bengal not only marks a memorable event in the history of the English administration in this country, but constitutes probably the most notable contribution that Verelst made during his short regime towards the re-organisation of the existing land revenue administration in Bengal. The policy underlying the elaborate scheme for the appointment of the Supervisors was essentially Verelst's own, and, as such, is of special interest for the light it throws on his broadminded conception of the Company's ultimate responsibility for the welfare of the poor ryot, and on his well-intentioned attempt to realise his high ideal in this respect.

The institution of Supervisorships appears to have been inspired by a number of considerations. The success of the English supervision of the Ceded lands had already been so conspicuous¹ that it naturally created the impression that a gradual extension of that system in the Diwani portion of Bengal was both necessary and practicable. In fact, as a result of the direct management by the English officials, the Company's proprietary lands were in a flourishing condition,² and exhibited "a pleasing scene" of "plenty, content, and population." It is needless to point out in this connection that much of the success of the revenue administration of the Ceded lands was due to the wise regulations that Verelst himself had introduced as Supervisor. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that Verelst anticipated that if similar regulations were established in the Diwani lands, they would lead to "the same beneficial consequences to the country and the

¹ Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769, etc.

² "The Province of Burdwan exhibited the face of a garden." Verelst's Minute, Beng. Sel. Com., August 11, 1769.

Vide also Verelst's View, etc., p. 75.

Company."³ The example of the successful administration of the proprietary lands by Englishmen was thus the most powerful consideration⁴ that led to the appointment of the English Supervisors for the rest of Bengal.

The iniquity and oppressive character of the revenue system in the Diwani lands were so glaring, and the situation was depicted⁵ in such dark colours by Mr. Becher that the authorities were convinced of the necessity of an immediate intervention. The plan of revenue collections in the Diwani portion was regarded as a source of oppression, inasmuch as⁶ firstly, the collections were made with the utmost strictness, secondly, the revenue demand was steadily increased without regard to future consequences, and, thirdly, the collectors, having no fixed '*hust-o-bud*,' according to which they were to collect, racked the country placed under their charge, and along with their agents and dependents "fattened on the spoils of the industrious ryot."⁷ "To save this fine country from ruin and to preserve, on a permanent footing, the Company's valuable possessions in these provinces," therefore, it was considered necessary to alter the existing system in the interests of the poor and oppressed ryot.

The highhandedness and venality of the government officials,⁸ generally adventurers⁹ from Persia or Northern India, and, as such, strangers to the customs and indifferent to the welfare of the country, had become so notorious in the absence of an effective check over them that the appointment of impartial Supervisors was regarded as the best means to arrest the progress of these evils, and afford effectual protection to the poor

³ Beng. Sel. Com., August 16, 1769.

⁴ Verelst's View, etc., p. 75.

⁵ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, May 24, 1769.

⁶ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, *op. cit.*, Letter from Messrs Verelst and Becher, June 30, 1769.

⁷ Verelst's View, etc., p. 75.

⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., August 16, 1769.

⁹ Dow, *History of Hindostan*, I, p. cxxvi .

from the injustice and oppression of the strong. In the present state of affairs the Resident at the Durbar could alone neither prevent oppression, nor obtain direct and authentic information of the grievances of the people. It was expected, therefore, that, if English Supervisors were appointed in each district to keep a vigilant watch on the local officials, the tyranny of the latter would be effectively restrained.

The virtual concentration¹⁰ of all authority in the hands of the Naib-Diwan was deemed to be an error which gave rise to inefficiency, no less than "a complex corruption"¹¹ which was difficult, if not inexpedient to detect. The authorities could not help feeling that one single man, howsoever honest, able, and loyal he might be, should not, in good policy, be trusted with such extensive powers and duties as had been delegated to Muhammad Riza Khan. They believed that as a result of the delegation of a trust to one, or to a few, which required the abilities of many to execute, the administration of justice had been rendered difficult, as the aggrieved party could not easily find out where to prefer his complaints, and in whom the right of final decision was actually vested.

The authorities were sensible of the fact that the abuses of the existing system could not be eradicated without a thorough local investigation.¹² In fact, it was this want of adequate knowledge and the means of immediate information which were held to be primarily responsible for the general prevalence of tyranny and corruption. The authorities were necessarily ignorant of the real produce and value of the Diwani lands, inasmuch as the officials usually concealed all sources of information at first from pure self-interest, and afterwards continued the deception from fear of punishment and a natural regard for their own safety. Hence, to provide for an adequate reformation, and at the same time to keep the

¹⁰ ". . . . in a word, every branch of the Administration centred in Mohamed Reza Cawn." Warren Hastings's Minute, Committee of Circuit, July 11, 1772.

¹¹ Beng. Sel. Com., August 16, 1769.

¹² Verelst's View, etc., p. 76.

revenues intact demanded a prolonged local enquiry. This necessitated the appointment of Supervisors whose researches alone could enable the authorities to formulate their future plan of reformation with care and judgment. The Select Committee rightly urged, "We have yet but an imperfect knowledge of the soil, the productions, the value, the capacity of the various provinces, and sub-divisions of the country." This is why they concluded,¹³ ". . . to acquire this knowledge should therefore be our first care."

Verelst believed that the ultimate security of any government lay in the affections of the people. It is a noteworthy fact that the appointment of English supervisors appeared to him to be a preliminary step towards the enlistment of the popular sympathies and affections. "I have hitherto considered our interest in this country as built on a precarious foundation," he wrote on the eve of his retirement, "because this cement was wanting to bind it; and, in this point of view, I am particularly happy on the late resolutions which have been taken to appoint English Supervisors, as an introduction to so desirable an event."¹⁴

It was further hoped¹⁵ that the appointment of the Supervisors would not only lead to the destruction and prevention of all trade monopolies, but would also promote the growth and diffusion of the general trade of the country.

The Supervisorships were also meant to be a "nursery"¹⁶ for trained officials, capable of succeeding, when called upon to do so, to the highest offices in the government. It was expected that by reason of his duties a Supervisor was likely to acquire a perfect knowledge of the laws and customs of the country, form a correct judgment upon the spot on the dispositions of the people, see with his own eyes the customary abuses of office, the tyranny of subordinates, and, the true

¹³ Beng. Sel. Com., August 16, 1769.

¹⁴ Beng. Pub. Cons., December 16, 1769.

¹⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., December 15, 1769.

¹⁶ Beng. Pub. Cons., December 16, 1769.

spring of the prosperity or decline of the country. In short, Verelst hoped that by the institution of Supervisorships a regular supply of able and vigorous administrators could be permanently ensured.

The circumstances that finally led to the adoption of the scheme of the Supervisorships may now be briefly analysed. It had been generally overlooked by historians so far that it was Mr. Sykes who first stressed the utility of appointing English gentlemen as a check¹⁷ on the collections in the Diwani lands. "I was induced to try the effects of placing one English gentleman for a short time as a check upon the collection," he wrote on the eve of his retirement, "the consequences have been so favourable that I am inclined to give it as my opinion that if gentlemen of character were stationed with the collectors, it would be attended with great benefit to the inhabitants and future advantages to the revenues."¹⁸

His successor, Mr. Becher, was more emphatic in his denunciation of the malpractices of the Indian collectors, and pressed¹⁹ for the adoption of "a better system" which might prove conducive as much to the welfare of the country as to the benefit of the Company, for, as he rightly urged, "the Company's valuable possessions in Bengal should be esteemed permanent, and such measures pursued as will be most likely to make them so."²⁰ In another letter, written on May 24, Mr. Becher described in detail the manifold abuses of the present plan of revenue collection, and pleaded for the application of the plan "now practised at Burdwan" to the whole of the province, so that the 'animals' and the zamindars might be prevented from oppressing the ryots, or defrauding the government of its just dues.²¹

¹⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., January 4, 1769.

¹⁸ Letter from Mr. F. Sykes, January 2, 1769.

¹⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.

²⁰ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, May 7, 1769.

²¹ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, May 24, 1769.

During his visit to Murshidabad on the occasion of the annual 'Punyaha,' Verelst had opportunities of discussing the whole situation with Mr. Becher. That the Governor had at this time practically decided upon the plan of Supervisorships is apparent from the fact that he sent Mr. G. G. Ducarel in June to Purnea in order "to assist in such a plan for conducting the collection in that district, as will best tend to the improvement of the country, the care of the ryots, and the benefit of our employers."²² The deputation²³ of Mr. Ducarel may thus be regarded as the prelude to the final adoption of a comprehensive plan of Supervisorship for the whole of Bengal.

In July²⁴ the Select Committee considered the problem in all its aspects, and in August,²⁵ after considering the joint letter of the Governor and Mr. Becher, together with their separate opinions²⁶ on the general state of the country, came to the conclusion that the situation was such as gave room for "the most serious apprehension," and that no reformation was possible "whilst we sit tamely." The Committee were, however, fully sensible of the fact that the minutest local investigation was necessary, before an accurate knowledge of the real state of the country could be obtained, which they considered to be the foundation "on which, and which only, we can build with success." With this end in view, the Committee unanimously resolved, "That, in every province or district, a gentleman in the service be appointed with or without assistance, in proportion to the extent of the district, whose office or department is to be subordinate to the Resident of the Durbar, and managed as is expressly set forth and

²² Letter from Messrs Verelst and Becher June 30, 1767. (*Vide* Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.)

²³ The experiment was justified by the reforms introduced by Mr. Ducarel. *Vide* Letter from Mr. R. Becher, August 26, 1769. Beng. Sel. Com., September 25, 1769.

²⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.

²⁵ Beng. Sel. Com. August 16, 1769.

²⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., August 11, 1769.

defined in the following letter of instructions which the President has prepared and submitted to our consideration with such additions as may occasionally be deemed necessary by the Resident at the Durbar."

This decision, it may be noted, was taken by the Committee on the basis of "an equivocal permission"²⁷ given by the Directors in one of their recent letters.²⁸ It will be recalled that so far the Directors had frequently forbidden the authorities to interfere in the administration of the country and appear as principals.²⁹ The authorities accordingly had no freedom of action, or power of reformation. The letter last received from the Directors, however, seemed to give the necessary sanction for the appointment of English gentlemen to supervise the different districts and watch the conduct of the agents of the country government. The letter in question was not fully explicit on this point, but the fact that the Directors had in this letter intimated their approval of the plan adopted for the revenue administration of the Ceded lands was not unjustifiably interpreted as an implied sanction for the extension of the aforesaid plan to the Diwani portion of Bengal. The action taken by the Select Committee was later on fully approved by the Directors.³⁰

The long and elaborate letter of instructions, drawn up by Verelst himself³¹ for the guidance of the Supervisors, indicates the following five main heads of their duty³² :—

²⁷ Verelst's View, etc., p. 75.

²⁸ Letter from Court, November 11, 1768.

²⁹ Letter from Court, May 17, 1766.

Letter from Court, November 20, 1767, etc., etc.

³⁰ Letter from Court, April 10, 1771.

³¹ Beng. Sel. Com., August 16, 1769.

Letter to Court, September 30, 1769.

Verelst's View, etc., p. 76.

³² Beng. Sel. Com., August 16, 1769.

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Verelst's View, etc., Appendix, pp. 227—39

1. To prepare a summary history of the districts placed under their charge.
2. To report on the state, produce, and capacity of the lands in their districts.
3. To ascertain the amount and the manner of the collection of revenue, cesses, and other demands made on the ryot by the Government, the Zamindar, or the Collectors.
4. To examine and regulate the conditions of commerce, and abolish all extraordinary demands of the gumashtahs and other agents.
5. To enforce justice, check corruption, and abolish all arbitrary fines.

Under the first head, the Supervisors were to collect full information regarding the ancient constitution of their districts, as compared with the present, and prepare a detailed historical account of the ruling families, with a statement of their connections, peculiar customs, and rights and privileges. The Supervisors in this connection were not to embarrass themselves with records earlier than those of the regime of Shujah Khan. In case, the records in the public cutcherry were found destroyed or mutilated, the Supervisors were to consult men of experience and understanding, but, in dealing with oral evidence, they were to use their own judgment in extracting the truth and in distinguishing between private bias and the real state of facts.

Under the second head, the Supervisors were to procure a complete '*Hust-o-bud*' or rent-roll of their districts, fix the ancient boundaries and divisions, trace the alterations made up to the present time, examine the titles of the holders of rent-free lands, whether '*ta'alluqah*,' or '*jagir*,' or '*altamgha*,' or '*aimmah*,' or '*khairat*,' and examine the extent, produce, and value of the rent-free, the '*khas*,' the '*khamar*,' the '*Ryoty*,' and the waste lands.

They were not to rely on the existing '*hust-o-bud*' adapted to the private interests of the zamindars, but were to collect information necessary for the formation of a new and accurate one. For this purpose they were to visit each division, and even sub-divisions of their districts, call on the zamindars or the local collectors, and thereby obtain a complete list of the '*pattahs*' of the ryots who were to be assured that the enquiries on foot were being made to redress their just grievances, and not for the purpose of increasing the revenue demand. Any opposition to such enquiries on the part of the zamindars or the collectors was to be punished, and precautions were to be taken to guard against all possible evasions and artifices. Present records as well as those of the days of Shujah Khan and Alivardi Khan were to be carefully consulted and compared. After such enquiries, they were to resume all lands clandestinely usurped by the zamindars, or the collectors and their underlings. They were also to stop all frauds and abuses in connection with the enjoyment of the recognised free-hold lands ('*Nijjot*' or '*Nankar*'), and other customary perquisites of the zamindars such as '*nazarana*h,' '*sedī*,' '*batta*' on rupees, duties collected in markets, fines levied at will, etc.

Under the third head, the Supervisors were to ascertain details regarding every particular tax or cess, and other illegal demands imposed by the *amil* and the zamindar down to the lowest '*pyke*.' The oppression of the poor by the '*daroghahs*', '*kotwals*', and '*pykes*' was to be prevented, and accounts were to be taken of their number, distribution, and emoluments. The amount which the zamindar received from the ryots was to be fixed, and all his fraudulent impositions and emoluments were to be checked. All rent-free and charity lands were to be carefully and scrupulously scrutinised, and the registration of the title-deeds was to be enforced within a reasonable time-limit. The encroachments made by Taluqdars, Jagirdars, and holders of charitable and religious lands were to be checked. The transfers of such lands, unconfirmed by deeds signed by the Nawab

void, and the lands forfeited. The reasons for the decay of the 'Khas' lands were to be investigated, and longer leases were to be offered to the farmers at a moderate and gradually increasing rent. In the 'khamar' lands, the amount which the cultivator received for his labour was to be ascertained, and the embezzlements of the zamindars were to be brought to account. Poor and unemployed people were to be encouraged to settle in the 'khamar' lands so that they might become 'Ryoty' lands. With regard to the 'Ryoty' lands, their real produce was to be ascertained, and fertile lands fraudulently denominated as waste lands were to be brought to the public credit after a careful investigation. The ryots were to be asked to state what they paid in excess of their established rents. A list of *ghats* and public markets, with an account of the customary duties, was to be procured from the zamindars, and enquiries were to be made into all undue and illegal exactions of the 'daroghahs', 'kotwals', and others. The exports and imports were to be noted at the markets and *ghats* situated on the borders of the province. Having in this manner ascertained the extent of all public and private collections and, impositions on the ryot and trader, the Supervisors were to frame an accurate rent-roll and transmit the same to Murshidabad. At the expiration of each year, the accounts were to be closed, and a separate statement of balances with their reasons was to be forwarded to the Resident at the Durbar.

Under the fourth head, the Supervisors were to make an estimate of the produce of their districts, ascertain the amount of manufactures and the number of workers employed in every branch with the annual duties collected from them, and examine the prices and qualities at different periods. Enquiries were to be made into the distribution of the manufactured goods, while the proportion which fell to the shares of the English, French, Dutch, and other foreigners was to be carefully investigated. The arbitrary and fraudulent impositions of the 'gumashtahs', 'paikars', 'dallals', and other agents were to be laid open, and totally abolished. The Supervisors were to see that the manufacturer received a fair and just

price for his goods. For this purpose, they were to induce the latter to bring his goods to the public market, and make his bargain openly and in person. The Supervisors were also to make daily registers of the amount, quality, and price of goods sold, and of the prices of goods for which advances had been made. Finally, they were to impress on all zamindars, collectors, and public agents the fact that commerce and agriculture were interdependent, and could thrive from the same causes.

Under the last head, the Supervisors were to enforce justice, and prevent composition by fine or mulct of all capital cases. In disputes regarding the property, they were to encourage arbitration by men chosen by the parties themselves, and of known integrity. In capital crimes the sentence, before execution, was to be referred to the Ministers through the Resident at the Durbar. Records of all cases were to be maintained in the principal cutcherry, and an authenticated monthly return was to be transmitted to Murshidabad. Vexatious revenue suits and unlawful demands were to be obviated by the grant of regular '*pattahs*'. The Supervisors were also to extirpate corruption and the arbitrary imposition of fines. They were to call upon all officers of justice to produce and register their '*sanads*', so that usurpers of judicial authority might be deprived of their powers. They were also to see that the forfeiture of caste, a peculiar punishment to which the Hindus were liable for social or religious offences, was not arbitrarily inflicted from private pique and personal resentment alone.

The letter of instructions, briefly summarised above, concludes with a moving appeal which reveals a tender regard for the poor ryot of Bengal:—"Your commission entrusts you with the superintendence and charge of a province, whose rise and fall must considerably affect the public welfare of the whole. The exploring and eradicating of numberless oppressions, which are as grievous to the poor as they are injurious to the government; the displaying of those national principles of honour, faith, rectitude, and humanity, which should ever

characterize the name of an Englishman; the impressing the lowest individual with these ideas, and raising the heart of the ryot from oppression and dependency to security and joy, are valuable benefits which must result to our nation from a prudent and wise behaviour on your part. Versed as you are in the language, depend on none, where you yourself can possibly hear and determine. Let access to you be easy, and be careful of the conduct of your dependents. Aim at no undue influence yourself, and check it in all others. Great share of integrity, disinterestedness, assiduity, and watchfulness is necessary, not only for your own guidance, but as an example for all others, for your activity and advice will be in vain, unless confirmed by example. Carefully avoid all interested views by commerce or otherwise, in the province, whilst on this service; for, though ever so fair and honest, it will awaken the attention of the designing, double the labour of developing stratagems, and of removing burthens and discouragements with which the commerce of the country in general has been loaded. You have before you a large field to establish both in national and private character; lose not the opportunity, which is to be temporary only, for your whole proceedings will be quickly revised; a test which the Board consider due to themselves, as a confirmation of the propriety of their choice, to you, as an act of justice to your conduct; and to the public, for the security of its interests. As the extent and importance of your trust are great, so in proportion will be the approbation or censure, arising from your good or ill conduct in it, attended with unusual distinction or particular severity. Sentiments which I convey to you, to show the degree of confidence the Board repose in your integrity and abilities; but by which I mean not the remotest suspicion, either in them or myself, of your disappointing their expectations."

Early in September³³ the Council considered the proceedings of the Select Committee held on August 16, and unanimously resolved to adopt the plan of Supervisorships

³³ Beng. Secret. Cons., September 4, 1769.

immediately, deeming it to be " of the utmost importance to the welfare of the country and the Company ". Sensible of the benefits that might result from the adoption of this plan, the Council urged that a thorough reformation of the entire administration was bound to take time, and could be effected only by slow and gradual degrees, and considered it necessary therefore to keep the idea of an immediate increase of revenue distinct from the proposed plan, for, as they rightly pointed out, " lucrative advantages must follow ", and could not " precede the alleviation of burdens, and suppressions of frauds." Agreeing, however " to exert their utmost endeavours in accomplishing the views of the Select Committee ", the Council appointed the following gentlemen as Supervisors of the Bengal districts³⁴ named below, and directed³⁵ Mr. Becher to instruct and supervise the latter in the discharge of their new duties :—

Mr. T. Kelsall	...	... Dacca.
Mr. J. Grose	...	... Rangpur.
Mr. G. Vansittart	...	... Dinajpur.
Mr. G. G. Ducarel	...	... Purnea.
Mr. C. W. Boughton-Rous	...	... Rajshahi.
Mr. J. Graham	...	... Hooghly.
Mr. C. Stuart	...	... Birbhum.
Mr. W. Harwood	...	... Lands north of Murshidabad and west of the Ganges.

In reply to their letter of September 4, Mr. Becher wrote³⁶ to the Governor and Council, expressing his hearty approval of the proposed plan, and intimating his assurance that he would

³⁴ Supervisors for the districts in Bihar were appointed in the time of Cartier. *Vide* Beng. Sel. Com., June 9, August 2, 1770.

³⁵ Letter to Mr. R. Becher, September 4, 1769

³⁶ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, September 14, 1769, (Beng. Secret. Cons., October 5, 1769.)

exert his utmost endeavours towards perfecting it, but he counselled delay in the execution of the plan on the ground that an immediate appointment of the Supervisors would prove detrimental to the present year's collections. In order to explain his sentiments on the subject more fully, he asked³⁷ for permission to come down to Calcutta and take part in the deliberations on the proposed reforms. Muhammad Riza Khan³⁸ too, while commending³⁹ the plan, suggested that its execution might be deferred⁴⁰ to the beginning of the next year.⁴¹ The authorities accordingly agreed to postpone the immediate execution of their plan, and permitted Mr. Becher,⁴² and Muhammad Riza Khan⁴³ to come to Calcutta and explain their objections personally.

After his arrival at Calcutta, Mr. Becher wrote⁴⁴ to the Governor and Select Committee on October 10, giving a detailed statement of the reasons why he thought it advisable to postpone the execution of the proposed plan, until the current year's collections were over, at least in districts where ' amils ' had been employed. The reasons given by Mr. Becher may here be briefly summarised.

As the appointments stood at present, many places of importance, where enquiry was absolutely essential, had been left unrepresented. It was necessary therefore at the outset

³⁷ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, September 13, 1769 (Beng. Sel. Com., September 25, 1769.)

³⁸ *Muzaffar-Namah* (Alld. Univ. MS.), p. 452.

³⁹ It is interesting to note that Mr. Richard Barwell wrote to Mr. R. Leycester on October 4, "Mohamed Reza Cawn, not liking the new system, has put off the evil day." (*Vide Bengal: Past and Present* X, p. 236.)

⁴⁰ Trans R 1769, No. 139.

⁴¹ Trans. R 1769, No. 144.

⁴² Letter to Mr. R. Becher, September 16, 1769.
(Beng. Sel. Com., September 25, 1769.)

⁴³ Cop. I. 1769, No. 82.

⁴⁴ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, October 10, 1769 (Beng. Sel. Com., October 12, 1769.)
(Beng. Sel. Com., October 12, 1769.)

to make a proper delimitation of all the districts in Bengal, so that every part thereof might come within the jurisdiction of some supervisor or the other.

Several important matters such as the mode of collecting the revenue during the ensuing season, the extent to which the supervisors were to be engaged in that branch, the degree of authority they were to be invested with, or the question as to whether some people on behalf of the Nawab were to accompany the Supervisors had not yet been discussed or settled.

The necessary search for, and examination of such old records at Murshidabad as might help the Supervisors in their enquiries were bound to take time.

Lest the Supervisors should be hampered in their work by the present revenue collectors, it was necessary to secure the good-will and active co-operation of the Nawab and Muhammad Riza Khan, which could be easily obtained provided sufficient time was allowed to convince them of the propriety of the proposed reformation.

Although the Supervisors themselves were not to interfere in the work of collections, their enquiries would necessitate the laying before them of all the relevant records and revenue accounts, and if the collectors concerned were to be summoned to explain these, as would, of course, be necessary, they would necessarily have to neglect their normal duties.

The arrival of the Supervisors "in the height of the collections" would create a divided power, and provide the artful people with a good opportunity of evading payment of the revenues by preferring numberless complaints, the justness or impropriety of which the Supervisors, being imperfectly acquainted with the manner of enforcing the collections, would be unable to judge. Much inconvenience and loss of revenue would result from this in consequence.

The collectors at present employed in the districts would naturally look upon the Supervisors as their potential enemies, and attempt to conceal every information they possibly could. But, if new men were appointed in the next season, and hopes

of reward and honour were held out to them, they would prove of the greatest use to the Supervisors in all their local enquiries.

Not only no inconvenience could arise from postponement or delay, but the intervening period could be well utilised in such preparations as would be considered most essential to the success of the proposed reform.

Mr. Becher, however, agreed that no time should be lost in the appointment of Supervisors in the Bihar and Bhagalpur districts, as the collections had been recently over there, and also because these districts, being in a declining state, were "in great want of present abatements and lenient measures in order to recover their former flourishing situation." He proposed at the same time that the Supervisors before taking up charge of their respective stations should undergo a special training at Murshidabad for at least six weeks under the Resident at the Durbar, and thereby master every information that would be of use to them in the execution of their important trust. Presuming from the tenor of the instructions given to the Supervisors that their appointments were meant to be temporary, Mr. Becher differed with the Select Committee on this point. "I think" he urged, "their appointments should be permanent, and that when we have once adopted the plan of sending English gentlemen into the districts, they should be continued there, and invested with such a degree of power as may be judged necessary for the well conducting the collection of the revenues, carrying on the trade of the country to the general benefit, and answering the other good purposes intended by the new adopted plan."

The question as to whether the plan should be immediately enforced, or deferred for a few months came up for final decision before the Council towards the close of October.¹⁵ The majority, being impressed with the opinion of Mr. Becher that the collections might suffer as a result of an immediate enforcement of the plan, favoured the view that the appoint-

ment of the Supervisors should be deferred till the close of February, 1770, except for those districts where the Resident at the Durbar thought the Supervisors might be sent immediately without detriment to the collections. It was accordingly agreed in the end that the Supervisors appointed to Purnea, Nadia, Rajshahi, and Rajmahal should immediately proceed to Murshidabad to receive their instructions from Mr. Becher, and that the rest should continue in their present stations until the close of February, 1770.

Meanwhile, Mr. Becher grouped the districts of Bengal into convenient divisions by annexing to each principal district all such smaller places as lay contiguous thereto, or had by any former tenure depended thereon.¹⁶ For example, the salt lands of Hijili were added to Hooghly on which they had usually depended, as also several 'Ta'alluqahs' which lay in its neighbourhood. Bishnupur was attached to Birbhum; while Idrakpur, Baharbund, Rangamati, and its dependencies were similarly attached to Rangpur. Sylhet was joined to the Dacca division, while the lands north of Murshidabad and west of the Ganges were combined to form the division of Bhagalpur and Rajmahal. After these additions had been made, there remained still the following districts which did not come under the jurisdiction of any of the Supervisors:—

Chunakhali and its dependencies,

Rokunpur,

Jehangirpur,

Fateh Singh Lashkarpur, etc.,

Jessore,

At their meeting¹⁷ held on December 10, the Select Committee unanimously approved of the plan drawn up by Mr. Becher for the management of the divisions to be placed under the charge of the Supervisors. Among the unrepresent-

¹⁶ Letter from Mr. R. Becher, November 26, 1769

Beng. Sel. Com., December 7, 1769

¹⁷ Beng. Sel. Com., December 10, 1769.

ed areas, Chunakhali and its dependencies, Fateh Singh Lashkarpur, and parts of Rajshahi west of the Ganges were placed under the direct charge of the Resident at the Durbar, while a separate Supervisorship was created for Jessore. The question of appointing a Supervisor for Rokunpur was referred to Mr. Becher for his opinion.

The divisions placed under the charge of the Supervisors, together with the gross amount of their annual revenues, are noted below :—

Hooghly, including the salt lands of Hijili and the 'ta'alluqahs' belonging thereunto. (Mr. J. Graham).	Rs. 10,29,451—9—18—1
Bishnupur, Birbhum, and Pachet. (Mr. C. Stuart)	Rs. 10,45,501—11—0—0
Rangpur, Idrakpur, Baharbund, Rangamati, and its dependencies (Mr. J. Grose).	Rs. 9,23,052—5—2—3
Dacca and Sylhet (Chief of Dacca).	Rs. 24,12,511—4—10—2
Bhagalpur and Rajmahal (Mr. W. Harwood)	Rs. 3,74,029—0—9—3 (For Rajmahal)
	N.B.—The amount for Bhagalpur not stated).
Chunakhali and its dependencies, Fateh Singh Lashkarpur and parts of Rajshahi west of the Ganges. (Resident at the Durbar).	Rs. 15,58,216—9—16—1
Jehangirpur and Dinajpur. (Mr. G. Vansittart).	Rs. 20,38,900—13—15—2
Parts of Rajshahi east of the Ganges. (Mr. W. B. Rous).	(N.B. not stated).
Jessore (Mr. R. Wilmot).	Rs. 7,30,057—9—17—0
Tippera (Mr. W. Wilkins).	Rs. 1,33,000

Although the instructions framed by Verelst and approved by the Select Committee were sufficiently exhaustive, the Select Committee authorised¹⁸ the Resident at the Durbar to issue such supplementary instructions to the Supervisors as might be found necessary hereafterwards. Ordinarily, the Resident was to obtain the previous sanction of the Select Committee to all such additional instructions, but on occasions of emergency he was to have authority for enforcing his instructions immediately, though in such cases he was to take the earliest opportunity of forwarding his instructions to the Select Committee with his reasons for the same. Besides, it was finally decided to place the Supervisors under the control of the Resident at the Durbar, who in cases of any misconduct on their part, was to have the power of recalling them from their stations, and of reporting their proceedings to the Governor and Select Committee. It was, however, agreed that the Supervisor of Dacca, being a member of the Council, and, as such, equal in status to the Resident at the Durbar, was not to be subordinate to the latter, though he too was to send all his reports and accounts to him "in order to preserve the form of government by their being laid regularly before the Ministers for their sanction and opinions."

A few days before Verelst finally laid down his office, the Select Committee framed certain general directions¹⁹ for the conduct of the Supervisors. These may be summarised as follows :—

1. Though the Supervisors for the present were not to interfere in the work of collections, they were to exercise a controlling authority over the collectors in order to prevent them from counteracting the measures for the relief of the country and the improvement of the collection of the revenues.

¹⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., December 10, 1769.

(Vide Letter to Mr. R. Becher.)

¹⁹ Beng. Sel. Com., December 15, 1769.

Letter to Mr. R. Becher, December 15, 1769.

2. The amils, zamindars, and other officers superintending the collections were to be required "to consult and mutually act on every occasion with, and report all transactions to the Supervisors." In cases of difference of opinion, the Supervisors were to have "a negative voice" until they reported their reasons for such negative to the Resident at the Durbar, and receive from him the necessary orders of the Ministry.
3. The Supervisors were to have the same negative voice in all judicial proceedings.
4. Although the Supervisors were not to be debarred from carrying on private trade of their own "so long as it does not rise to the one (i.e., to a monopoly), or counteract the other (i.e., general commerce)," they were to carry on their researches "with as few embarrassments as possible."
5. The Supervisors were "to avoid all appearance of pomp and parade whatsoever," and "pursue a system of economy in all their measures."
6. They were also to send a monthly return of their expenses to the Resident at the Durbar so that the Select Committee might be enabled to judge what allowances should be granted to them.

Although the plan of Supervisorships actually came into force in the time of Cartier,⁵⁰ it will not be improper here to analyse the causes responsible for its ultimate failure.

The duties entrusted to the Supervisors were so numerous and difficult that they called for almost superhuman labours, and it was not humanly possible for them to execute even a small part of their trust. They were to be not so much revenue

⁵⁰ In his farewell letter to the Council Verelst wrote, "I could have wished to have seen the execution of the plan during my continuance in the government, but permission was denied to me before and a necessary regard to my health makes it impossible now." Beng. Pub. Cons., December 16, 1769.

superintendents as historians, economic investigators, rural statisticians, experts in land tenures, trade development officers, controllers of law and justice, and protectors of the poor. Having been ordered to perform far more than they could possibly execute, they finished by performing much less than they might have done.

The number of the Supervisors actually appointed was much too small for the exhaustive work of control imposed upon them. The Resident at the Durbar who was already overburdened with his own normal work, and was expected also to control the work of the Supervisors was to act as the Supervisor of a big division. The Chief of Dacca, whose duties in the local factory were no less arduous was also to act as the Supervisor of Dacca and Sylhet. From such an inadequate and overburdened staff, therefore, it was futile to expect any remarkable achievements.

From the outset the Supervisors were hampered in their investigations by the zamindars and collectors. To them the appointment of English Supervisors was naturally distasteful, and they tried their best to obstruct or embarrass the enquiries, and misrepresent the conduct of their new superintendents.

The Supervisors, with the exception of a few, had also little or no training⁵¹ for the specialised work with which they were entrusted.

Again, the Supervisors, originally appointed for the purpose of collecting information and of keeping a vigilant watch over the administration and the collection of the revenues, became eventually, in the words⁵² of Warren Hastings, "the sovereigns" of the divisions over which they presided, began to act as Chief Magistrates, collected the rents, and farmed the lands to persons whom they liked to favour. Thus, the original design which could have caused no material harm was frustrated with the subsequent transformation of the character of the Supervisorship itself.

The Indian '*banyan*' became in fact "the lord of every supervisorship,"⁵³ because all the business passed through his hands, and no complaints could reach his master without his permission. Thus, the '*banyans*' who were "devils," according to Warren Hastings, abused their powers and tyrannised over the poor with the utmost impunity, and thereby nullified the whole plan of supervisorships.

Not being debarred from engaging in private trade, the Supervisors were tempted to engross the inland trade of their districts, and exploit their privileged position for this purpose. They could thus have little leisure for their own normal duties.

Furthermore, the Supervisors were not only not granted adequate salaries, but their allowances were drastically reduced⁵⁴ in 1771 as a measure of economy desired by the Directors. This naturally created general dissatisfaction, and could hardly encourage them to rise above the general corruption.

The absence of a strict control over the Supervisors owing to the weakness and pre-occupations of the authorities at

(Vide the Letter copy books of the Resident at the Durbar, 1769—1770, p. iii.)

⁵² Letter from Warren Hastings to Mr. J. Dupre, March 26, 1772.

⁵³ Letter from Warren Hastings to Mr. Colebroke, March 26, 1772, and to Mr. J. Dupre, January 6, 1773.

⁵⁴ Beng. Pub. Cons., March 18, 1771. After the 31st of March 1771, the allowance of the Supervisors was reduced from Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 18,000 per annum.

Patna, Murshidabad, and Calcutta was further responsible for the failure of the plan. The Supervisors were often supported by strong connections either in the Council, or in the Court of Directors, and were, in the words⁷⁷ of Warren Hastings, secure from a strict scrutiny into their conduct and totally exempt from the fear of punishment.

Finally, the famine of 1770 also helped in upsetting⁷⁸ the whole plan.

Although the institution of the Supervisors failed to produce the desired results, it was undoubtedly a move in the right direction. It constituted the first step towards the direct assumption of administrative responsibility by the Company's servants in the Diwani portion of Bengal, and, as such, was the remote beginning of a new system ultimately introduced in the time of Warren Hastings. In fact, it is in the instructions given to the Supervisors that one would notice the first distinct enunciation of those high ideals which have made the Indian Civil Service a memorable institution in Indian History.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

The exigencies of the policy underlying the introduction of the dual system of government prevented the Company's servants from assuming a direct responsibility for the administration of justice in the whole of the province. Left to the nominal care of the Nawab and the Ministers who possessed no real powers, the machinery of law and justice in the Diwani portion of Bengal lost its former efficacy, and virtually ceased to operate beyond the narrow circle round about Murshidabad. Calcutta and the Ceded lands, being directly under the control of the Company's servants, had of course regular courts of justice, but even there the judicial organisation was not free from anomalies and imperfections. Fully sensible though he was of the gravity of the situation in this respect, Verelst had neither the authority, nor the resources to introduce any comprehensive plan of reform in the administration of justice in Bengal.

In accordance with the traditions of Mughal administration, the judicial powers in the 'Subah' were shared between the Nawab and the Diwan. In theory, the Nawab was the supreme magistrate in the province, and was responsible for the maintenance of the peace and administration of criminal justice, while the Diwan, by virtue of his office as the head of the provincial exchequer, held charge of civil jurisdiction, and was the highest judge in all civil and revenue matters. As a matter of fact, however, this line of demarcation between the jurisdiction of the Nizamat and the Diwani was practically obliterated after the assumption of the Diwani by the English. Despite its accession to the office of Diwan, the Company strictly enjoined upon¹ its servants not to interfere in the administra-

¹ Letter from Court, May 17, 1766.

Third Report, 1773. p. 398.

tion of justice, while the Nawab, having merely "the name and shadow of authority,"² had neither the power, nor the means to enforce³ the criminal jurisdiction of the Nizamat. The regular course of justice was thus, in the words of Warren Hastings, everywhere suspended.⁴ Muhammad Riza Khan who held the offices of Naib-Diwan and Naib-Nazim was more concerned with the collection of the revenue than with the exercise of civil and criminal jurisdiction. In consequence, there was a break-down in the administration of law and order in the Diwani portion of Bengal, and there were few law courts having more than a nominal existence outside Murshidabad. In the countryside lawlessness was on the increase owing to the impotence of the Nizamat, and the number of dacoities rose to an alarming extent.⁵ The 'Sannyasi' raiders, above all, created havoc in the outlying parts of Bengal, and the 'parganah' battalions found it increasingly difficult to cope with this danger.⁶

At Murshidabad the following officers had their courts⁷ :—

1. *The Nazim* who, as Supreme Magistrate, presided personally at the trial of capital offenders and held a court every Sunday.

² Beng. Sel. Com., January 16, 1767.

³ Fourth Report, 1773, p. 346.

⁴ Letter to Court, November 3, 1773.

"The Court and Offices of the Nizamat were continued, but their efficacy was destroyed by the ruling influence of the Dewannee. The regular course of justice was everywhere suspended . . ."

⁵ *Muzaffar-Namah* (Allahabad University Ms.), p. 441.

Proceedings of the Committee of Circuit, June 28, 1772.

Beng. Rev. Cons., November 17, 1772, August 13, 1773, April 19, 1774, etc. Even the government revenues were sometimes plundered. (Trans. R. 1766-8, Nos. 281, 326, Trans. R. 1768. No. 224, etc.)

⁶ Beng. Sel. Com., April 30, 1767.

Trans. R. 1768, No. 137, etc.

⁷ Letter from the Committee of Circuit to the Council at Fort William, August 15, 1772. *Siyar* (Lucknow Text), pp. 828-34.

2. *The Diwan* who was supposed to decide cases relating to real estates and landed property, but seldom exercised this authority in person.
3. *The (Daroghah-Adalat-al-Alla),* or Deputy of the Nazim who was the judge of all matters of property, excepting claims of land and inheritance, and took cognizance of quarrels, frays, and abuse.
4. *The Daroghah-i-Adalat-Diwani,* or Deputy of the Diwan who decided cases relating to landed property.
5. *The Faujdar* who was the chief police officer and judge of all crimes not capital.
6. *The Qazi* who, besides being the judge of all claims of inheritance or succession, performed the ceremonies of weddings, circumcision, and funerals.
7. *The Muhtasib* who took cognizance of drunkenness, the vending of spirituous liquors and intoxicating drugs, and false weights and measures.
8. *The Mufti* who expounded the law and wrote the '*fatwa*' applicable to the case, in accordance with which the Qazi pronounced his judgment. If, however, the Qazi, or the Muhtasib disapproved of the '*fatwa*,' the case was referred to the Nazim who summoned a general assembly of the Qazi, the Mufti, the Muhtasib, the Daroghahs of the Adalat, the Maulvis, and all the learned jurists to meet and decide upon it. Their decision was final.
9. *The Qanungo* who, as Registrar of the lands, acted as a referee in cases relating to lands.
10. *The Kotwal* who was Peace Officer of the night, subordinate to the Faujdar.

From the above list it would be apparent that there were properly three courts for the decision of civil causes, and one

for police and criminal matters.' Of these, the courts of the Deputy-Diwan and the Faujdar alone were of some practical utility. The Courts did not always adhere to their prescribed bounds. Not only the Civil Courts encroached upon each other's authority, but both Civil and Criminal Courts sometimes took cognizance of the same subjects. For example, the Daroghas of the Adalat-al-Alia, and of the Diwani judged the same causes, whether of real or personal property, and the parties made their application as chance, caprice, or interest governed their choice. As a fact, however, the Adalat-al-Alia had no real importance. The Diwani Adalat was in effect the only tribunal that had more than a mere nominal existence.

In the districts the Faujdars acted as magistrates and chiefs of police, and had jurisdiction in criminal matters. They had under them 'Thanahdars' and 'Kotwals' who helped in maintaining the peace in villages and cities respectively. It is to the Faujdars⁸ therefore that the people in the districts looked up for justice.⁹ The Qazi had his substitutes¹⁰ in the countryside, but their legal powers were too limited to be of general use, and the authority which they assumed, being often warranted by no lawful commission, was often a source of oppression.¹¹ By virtue of their position in the hierarchy of the Diwan, the amils, shiqdars, naibs, and tahsildars had some jurisdiction in revenue cases, while the 'Mutasaddis' who were clerks in the revenue department and the Qanungos who kept registers of the value, tenure, and transfer of lands acted as referees in cases of dispute or uncertainty regarding rights in land. In the interior of the country, particularly in rural areas, the zamindar in his private cutcherry administered a

⁸ Acts of oppression on their part were not infrequent. *Vide* Cop. I. 1766-67, No. 163, and Trans. I. 1766-67, No. 234, etc., and *Siyar*, p. 834.

⁹ Warren Hastings's Minute, December 7, 1775. (Bengal, Secret, Consultations.)

¹⁰ The Qazis had their Naibs. (*Vide* Trans. R. 1767-68, No. 204.)

¹¹ Letter from the Committee of Circuit *op. cit.*

rough-and-ready type of justice,¹² and, although he did not preside over the local Faujdari Court, as has been wrongly stated¹³ in the Sixth Report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773, his criminal jurisdiction may have extended, at least, to the petty offences committed in his area.¹⁴

That the organisation of law and justice was in a deplorable condition will be apparent from the following facts.

The officers of justice received their appointments not on grounds of merit or suitability, but usually as a matter of official favour or indulgence. This encouraged unscrupulous people to seek posts in the courts of justice merely for the purpose of amassing immense fortunes for themselves.¹⁵ In consequence, venality and bribery were rampant, and "the painful task of rendering justice" was turned, in the words of the contemporary chronicler, "into a powerful engine for making a fortune."¹⁶

The judges were not paid fixed salaries. They derived their emoluments from fines and recognised perquisites, but there was no one to check the rate of the perquisites they drew from their office.¹⁷ As a rule, they took a great deal more perquisites than had been their due in former times.¹⁸ Thus, the judges were often guilty of nothing short of extortion.

The important office of the Qazi could be leased out and under-leased. The result was that people, ignorant even of

¹² According to Bolts, *Considerations on India Affairs*, p. 150, the defaulting ryots were "severely chastized" in the Zamindar's cutcherry.

¹³ The Sixth Report of the Committee of Secrecy, p. 2, "The Criminal Court, in every district, was generally known by the name of the Phousdary; the zamindar or Raja of the district was the judge in this court."

¹⁴ The Sixth Report of the Select Committee, 1782, p. 11.
 Holwell's *India Tracts*, pp. 120-1.

Bolts, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

¹⁵ *Siyar*, p. 829.

¹⁶ *Siyar*, *op. cit.*,

¹⁷ *Siyar*, *op. cit.*,

¹⁸ *Siyar*, p. 830.

here to complain, especially when it is to be considered that it must always be attended with loss of time, and risk of obtaining redress"²⁵

Owing to the absence of an effective control from Murshidabad, it was easy for people in the interior to assume judicial powers without any lawful title or commission.²⁶ Dow has hardly exaggerated in stating, "Every Mahomedan who can mutter over the Coran raises himself to a judge, without either licence or appointment; and every Brahmin, at the head of a tribe, distributes justice according to his fancy."²⁷ It was to prevent this growing evil that Verelst eventually directed the Supervisors to require all officers of justice in towns and villages to produce and register their 'sanads.'²⁸

The authorised '*Faujdari Bazi Jama*' or fines²⁹ for petty crimes and misdemeanours were not only an obnoxious exaction³⁰ in themselves, but constituted an additional incentive to bribery and oppression. It is interesting to note that the Supervisors were specially instructed by Verelst to put an end to all arbitrary fines.³¹

Registers and records of proceedings were not kept by the Courts. This, according to Verelst, encouraged the natural propensity of the judge to bribery and fraud, "by making him easy with respect to any future prosecution on a rehearing of the cases which have been thus partially determined."³²

²⁵ Beng. Sel. Com., July 8, 1769.

²⁶ Letter from Committee of Circuit, *op. cit.*

²⁷ Dow, *op. cit.*

²⁸ Letter of Instructions to the Supervisors. (*Vide Verelst's View, etc., p. 238.*)

²⁹ Letter from Warren Hastings, November 3, 1772.

³⁰ Letter from the Committee of Circuit, *op. cit.*

³¹ Letter of Instructions to the Supervisors. (*Vide Verelst's View, etc., p. 237.*)

³² Beng. Sel. Com., August 16, 1769.

Certain practices³³ sanctioned by Muslim law were also extremely anomalous, such as the infliction of fine, instead of capital punishment, for murder with an instrument not formed for shedding blood, the privilege granted to sons or the nearest relations to pardon a murderer, or the execution of the sentence passed on the murderer by the children or the nearest relations of the murdered. Barbarous punishments³⁴ such as mutilation or impalement, likewise allowed by the Islamic law, were also not uncommon.

In the Ceded lands the administration of justice was more regular, because the Chief at Chittagong, or the Residents at Midnapur and Burdwan, in addition to their normal duties, were also concerned with the courts of justice in their districts. They were invested with the superintendence of the Faujdari jurisdiction, and were authorised to arrest robbers, dacoits, and other disturbers of the peace. Under their supervision, the proceedings of the courts, except in matters of a trivial nature, were regularly recorded, and the sentences could not be executed, until approved and signed on the one hand by them on behalf of the Company as Diwan, and by the Nawab on the other. The judgment of the Faujdar had normally to be forwarded to Murshidabad for confirmation. When orders were received from the Naib-Nazim, it was the duty of the Chief or the Resident to enforce the execution of those orders. Appeals against the conduct³⁵ of the latter could at all times be made to the Governor and Council. In cases of capital punishments, the Chief or the Resident not infrequently sought the advice of the authorities at Calcutta. For example, the Resident at Midnapur once wrote,³⁶ "Some very horrid

³³ Letter from Warren Hastings, July 1, 1773. (Beng. Rev. Cons., August 3, 1773.)

³⁴ For example, a person guilty of forgery had his right hand cut off. (*Vide* Fifth Report, 1773. p. 546.)

³⁵ Verelst's View, etc., Appendix, p. 220.

³⁶ Letter from the Resident at Midnapur to the Collector-General, July 9, 1768.

murders have lately been committed here. The perpetrators are now in prison; the facts have been fully proved upon them, and are now confessed by themselves. What would you have me do with them? I wish to hang them for the sake of example, but do not think it would be proper to proceed to that extremity without your approbation." In reply, the authorities issued the following instructions,³⁷ ". . . . the perpetrators ought to be tried in Fausedar's Court at Midnapore; where, if the facts are proved, they must be condemned to death." The District Records of Chittagong, however, incidentally reveal that the trial for Capital offences were usually held by the Chief and Council, and sometimes by the Chief alone.³⁸

In his "View of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the English Government in Bengal," Verelst has referred to a number of local courts at Burdwan, and in this connection he mentions clearly that "the like administration" prevailed in the other districts³⁹ :—

1. *The Sadar Cutcherry.* In this Court, not only were all the land-rents and revenues of the district received, and accounts relative to them adjusted, but all transfers of land and property were confirmed, and differences between landlord and tenant heard and determined.
2. *The Bakshi Dastur.* This Court superintended the conduct of all the forces, guards, and other persons employed for the maintenance of the public peace.
3. *The Faujdari Adalat.* The jurisdiction of this court was wholly confined to criminal matters, and the judgment of capital offences.

³⁷ Letter from the Collector-General to the Resident at Midnapur, July 19, 1768.

³⁸ Letter from the Chief at Chittagong, April 26, 1769.

³⁹ Verelst's View, etc., Appendix, pp. 219-20.

4. *The Barah Adalat.* 'This was a court of ' *meum* and *tuum* ' for all demands above fifty rupees.
5. *The Amin Dastur.* This court was subordinate to the Sadar Cutcherry, and all complaints relating to the business of the revenue and the conduct of those employed in the collections were first heard here, and referred thence to the Sadar Cutcherry.
6. *The Chotah Adalat.* This Court took cognizance of petty suits for debts not exceeding fifty rupees.
7. *The Bazi Zamin Dastur.* It was the court for settling all differences relating to charity and rentfree lands.
8. *The Bazi Jama Dastur.* This Court took cognizance of social offences like adultery, abortion, etc., and had jurisdiction in matters concerning grants for lands and public works for the accommodation of travellers, such as ' *sarais* ' or resting places, etc.
9. *The Kharaj Dastur.* The land holders' accounts, when settled, were sent to this court for payment, and in cases where the debtor was incapable of paying the amount due, the court had the power to compromise the debt.

At Calcutta there were two sets of courts—one instituted by the royal charters and exercising jurisdiction from the English Crown over British subjects, their native employees, and other persons who willingly subjected themselves to that jurisdiction, and the other, established by the Company in its capacity as zamindar, and deriving its authority from the 'country government, and having jurisdiction over the local inhabitants only.

The following courts⁴⁰ of justice had been instituted by the royal charters⁴¹ :—

1. *The Mayor's Court.* It was a Court of Record, consisting of the Mayor and nine Aldermen, seven of whom, together with the Mayor, were to be natural-born British subjects, and the other two might be foreign protestants, but subjects of a state in amity with Great Britain. It could try, hear, and determine all civil suits, actions, and pleas that might arise within the settlement, except such as concerned the natives alone. It could take cognizance of the suits and actions between the natives also, when both the parties concerned, by mutual consent, submitted the same to its determination.⁴² It also granted probate of wills, and letters of administration for the estates of persons dying intestate. The Mayor and Aldermen were appointed by the Governor and Council,

⁴⁰ Verelst's View, etc., Introduction, Chapter V, etc.

Bolts, *op. cit.*, Chapter IX.

Second Report, 1772.

Sixth Report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773.

India Office Records Department, Correspondence Memoranda, Vol. 9.

India Office Records Department, Parliamentary Branch, Collection, No. 8. Early Parliamentary Papers relating to India, printed in 1788; Collection No. 22, "Some Records Relative to the Mayor's Court" by Firminger (Bengal: Past and Present, Vol. vii).

Introduction to the Fifth Report by Firminger, Chapter V. etc., etc., etc.

⁴¹ For the Charters, *vide* Cowell: History and Constitution of Courts and Legislative Authorities in India.

⁴² Letter from Court, March 4, 1767, "The Charter empowers the Mayor's Court to entertain suits between natives, if the not object to the jurisdiction."

but after appointment they held their office for life, although upon a reasonable cause they might be removed by the Governor and Council, such removal being subject only to an appeal to the King in Council in England.

2. *The Court of Appeals.* It was also a Court of Record, consisting of the Governor and Council. It was authorised by the charter to receive, hear, and finally determine every cause appealed from the decrees of the Mayor's Court, in which the value of the suit did not exceed one thousand pagodas, or about four hundred pounds sterling. From its decision in suits exceeding that sum, an appeal could lie to the King in Council, upon security being given for the payment of the amount decreed, with interest from the date of the decree, and costs of the suit.
3. *The Court of Requests.* It consisted of twenty-four Commissioners who sat on every Thursday to hear and determine in a summary fashion all such actions or suits as did not exceed five pagodas, or forty shillings in amount. One half of the Commissioners retired every year by rotation, and the members of the court filled up the vacancies by ballot among themselves.
4. *The Court of Quarter Session.* The Governor and members of the Council who had power to act as Justices of the Peace held Quarter Sessions four times in the year, and at all other times, they acted as Commissioners of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery to hear, try, and punish all criminal causes, except high treason, arising within the towns of Calcutta and the factories subordinate thereunto. They were authorised to appoint and summon Grand and Petty Juries for the purpose of such trials.

Besides the aforesaid courts, there were the following courts established under the authority of the country government⁴³ :—

1. *The Court of Cutcherry.* It consisted of the Company's servants under Council, any three of whom including their President met upon days stated at their own option to hear, try, and determine, in as summary fashion as possible, all matters of 'meum and tuum,' wherein only the native inhabitants of Calcutta were concerned. Appeals from the decisions of this Court could lie to the Governor and Council. Usually, arbitration was encouraged⁴⁴ in disputes regarding property. Parties that objected to arbitration were fined up to Rs. 200. On refusal to pay the fine, they were liable to be imprisoned. Persons appointed to arbitrate were also fined on refusal to do so, and were imprisoned, if reasons for their refusal appeared to be frivolous. The Court levied a special 'pachotra' or tax upon the amount of the suits instituted before them. The 'pachotra' was levied generally upon the whole amount of the suits, although the decrees were often, for a part of the sum sued for.⁴⁵ The 'pachotra' was also levied, even though the suits were dismissed as groundless. As regards

⁴³ Verelst's View, etc., pp. 27-8, etc. Bolts, *op. cit.*, pp. 80—83. Dow, *op. cit.*, p. cxxi.

India Tracts by Mr. Holwell and Friends, London, 1774, (*Vide A Vindication of Mr. Holwell's Character*, p. 120, etc.)

⁴⁴ Letter from the Court of Cutcherry, February 15, 1768. Beng. Pub. Cons., February 22, 1768, O. C., No. 2.

⁴⁵ Letter from the Committee of Appeals, February 10, 1768. Beng. Pub. Cons., March 3, 1768, O. C., No. 4.

Letter from the Court of Cutcherry, March 7, 1768. Beng. Pub. Cons., April 11, 1768, O. C. No. 5.

the range of the jurisdiction of this court, it is interesting to note, the Council laid down early in January, 1768, that it should not summon the natives living under the jurisdiction of the country government. The Council's resolution in this connection runs, "On any complaints being made by inhabitants within our districts against others within the districts of the government the same is to be represented to the President who will write to the officers of the Government where such person sued resides, and recommend an impartial enquiry to be made and justice done."⁴⁰

2. *The Zamindary or Faujdari Court.* It was presided over by a member of the Council, or sometimes a servant under Council alone. His duty was to hear all complaints of a criminal nature among the native inhabitants who did not apply to the English Court of Justice. He proceeded in a summary fashion to sentence and punish by fine, imprisonment, or condemnation to work in chains upon the roads in ordinary cases, and by flagellation even to death in capital cases. In latter cases, he usually first obtained the approbation of the Governor and Council before the fatal stroke was ordered.
3. *The Collector's Cutcherry.* The Collector who was generally a member of the Council, though sometimes a junior servant, had charge of the collection of the revenues of the Calcutta lands and the twenty-four parganahs, and, as such, took cognizance of all causes and disputes relating to the payment of the revenues. He punished the defaulting farmers and tenants, and punished others also for crimes and misdemeanours,

⁴⁰ Beng. Pub. Cons., January 11, 1768.

independently of the other courts established at Calcutta. From the very nature of his office, he was concerned with the police of the town of Calcutta. Besides, he issued, under the Company's seal, the '*pattahs*' to the inhabitants for the tenure of their houses and grounds, granted licences to the natives to marry, superintended the collection of duties, and farmed out the privilege of exercising many handicraft-trades.

4. *The Caste Catcherry.* The Court was presided over by some distinguished Hindu Official nominated by the Governor. In Vereist's time, Maharaja Nabakishna, the Company's Political Banyan, held charge of this Catcherry. The court took cognizance of all matters relative to the caste observances of the Hindus. In the exercise of his authority, the judge was assisted by a number of learned Brahmin priests in consultation with whom he pronounced judgment. The punishment awarded by this court was generally in the form of a sentence of excommunication, rendering the offender an outcast from society.

The judicatures established at Calcutta were not insufficient for the ordinary requirements of the settlement, but their jurisdictions were ill-defined, and their constitution was not wholly satisfactory.

As the courts were more or less an offshoot of the executive machinery itself, executive power and judicial authority were concentrated in the hands of the same persons, i.e. the Governor and Council. Bolts's denunciation¹⁷ of the whole system of justice is doubtless highly exaggerated and biassed, but it at least serves to expose the anomalous character of a system under which, to use his own words, the Governor and Council could, in fact, be the parties to prosecute, the

¹⁷ Bolts, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-111.

magistrates to imprison, the judges to sentence, the sovereigns to order execution, and such despots in authority that no grand or petit jury would easily venture to disoblige them.⁴⁸

Verelst in his aforesaid work has refuted the arguments of Bolts at some length, and has tried to establish⁴⁹ that the Governor and Council were not "cruel tyrants," nor were the courts of justice "engines of oppression," and the judges "servilely complaisant to the ruling power," as alleged by Bolts. It cannot be denied, however, that as the Aldermen owed their nomination⁵⁰ to the Governor and Council who constituted both the Court of Appeals and the Court of Quarter Session, the executive authorities did possess a preponderant influence in the sphere of justice.

The position of the Mayor's Court was a subject of controversy. Owing to its ill-defined authority, the Mayor's Court often assumed powers, in the words of a contemporary writer, "if not illegal, at least impolitic."⁵¹ The terms of its institution being vague, there was room for doubts⁵² as to whether its authority could extend beyond the Maratha Ditch, whether the native employees of the Company could be deemed to be British subjects, and whether they could be subjected to the laws of England.⁵³

⁴⁸ Bolts. *op. cit.*, p. 215.

⁴⁹ Verelst's View, etc., p. 21.

⁵⁰ The Governor and Council had, in the words of Bolts, the power of making and unmaking the judges. Bolts. *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁵¹ "Considerations on a pamphlet entitled *Thoughts on our acquisitions the East Indies particularly respecting Bengal, 1772*," p. 43.

⁵² Sixth Report of the Committee of Secrecy, 1773, House of Commons Reports, Vol. IV. p. 331.

The constitution of the Courts further did not provide for the appointment of experienced lawyers as judges. As a consequence, judicial power rested in the hands of men who had no training in law.⁵⁴ The judges were not always even senior in age and service. The Parliamentary enquiry of 1772-3 revealed, for instance, that the Aldermen of the Mayor's Court were mostly junior servants of the Company.

The position and powers of the Cutcheries too were ill-defined. For example, the want of a proper demarcation between the jurisdictions of the Court of Cutcherry and the Zamindary Cutcherry encouraged many people to carry causes already tried by one court for a fresh trial to the other. During Verelst's period, the Court of Cutcherry once strongly complained about this to the Governor and Council in a letter, dated September 28, 1767.⁵⁵ They pointed out that their decrees were in this manner "liable to be reversed through different representations of the case" and "those who have complied therewith" suffered "long and severe imprisonments as well as other punishments unless by application to us they cause the Zamindar to be acquainted with the previous decisions of the cause."⁵⁶

It would be unjust to conclude an account of the administration of justice in Verelst's time without referring to his statesmanlike insistence on continuing to the people their own laws, customs, and magistrates.⁵⁷ "As well might we transplant the full-grown oak to the banks of the Ganges," he urged. "as dream that any part of a code matured by the patient

⁵⁴ The author of "A Second Letter Concerning the Proposed Supervisorship," *op. cit.*, pleads, "I am far from insinuating the Company's servants can do no wrong. They are men—but not worse than other men."

⁵⁵ Beng. Pub. Cons., October 1, 1767.

⁵⁶ Letter from the Court of Cutcherry, September 28, 1767; O. C., No. 8, October 1, 1767.

⁵⁷ It will be recalled that Verelst compelled Col. Smith to revoke his order demanding the implicit obedience of the Sepoys to British laws.

Beng. Sel. Com., February 1768, *etc.*

labours of successive judges and legislators in this island, can possibly coalesce with the customs of Bengal."⁵⁸ That to impose English laws on the people of India would be not only highly impracticable, but an act of sheer injustice was a principle which Verelst held⁵⁹ no less ardently than Warren Hastings.

⁵⁸ Verelst's View, etc., p. 134.

⁵⁹ Verelst has devoted a whole chapter in his oft-quoted work to prove "the impossibility of introducing English laws into Bengal." Verelst's View, etc., pp. 130-148, Chapter V.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

One of the youngest¹ of the Company's civil servants on record at the time of his first appointment as a junior writer, Verelst gradually rose to the high and important office of Governor at a comparatively early age, by sheer force of character and ability. His long and meritorious career in the Company's service extended over a period of not less than twenty years,² and during this period he achieved distinction in every post³ that he successively held before his final accession to the Governorship. The story of his brief tenure of office as Governor is certainly not such as might dazzle the imagination, yet it has an abiding interest of its own. Although historians have, almost to a man, passed over his administration by hasty and misleading generalisations rather than fair and dispassionate research, it must be stated in all fairness to Verelst that he was in every respect one of the foremost, if not the foremost, among the Company's civilian-administrators preceding Warren Hastings.

¹ Born in 1734, Verelst came to Bengal in July 1749. (*Vide* a note by W. Irvine in *Bengal: Past and Present*, Vol. VI., p. 178.)

² Beng. Pub. Cons., December 16, 1769.

³ Having arrived in Bengal on the 16th of July, 1749, he became second at the Jugdea Factory in 1756. In the following year he was appointed Sub-Secretary at Fort William. Towards the close of 1760 he was sent to Chittagong as Chief. In 1763 he became a member of the Council. In 1765 he was appointed a member of the Select Committee. In the same year he went to Burdwan as Supervisor. In 1766 he was deputed to Midnapur in the same capacity. During this year he was appointed a member of the Committee of Inspection. Towards the close of the year he conducted an important enquiry into the revenue administration of the Calcutta lands. Early next year he resumed his membership of the Select Committee, and after Clive's departure became Governor.

The testimony of all his impartial contemporaries shows Verelst as a man of uncommon integrity, humanity, and intelligence. Indeed, it was these very qualities which won for him the highest esteem and affection of Clive¹, and ultimately led to his appointment as Governor.

In one of his letters to the Directors, Clive wrote⁵ in the following, almost superlative terms about the honesty and moderation of Verelst, "To find a man, in the midst of luxury and licentiousness, had retained the true idea of commercial economy; who inferior in fortune to most of your civil servants in the rank of Councillor, was yet superior to all in moderation and integrity; whose regard for the welfare of the public, and for the reputation of individuals, had made him warn others from falling into the temptations of corruption, which he saw were approaching, and who could actually resist those temptations himself, when a share was allotted him of money he thought unwarrantably obtained; to find such a man in such a settlement would appear incredible to those who are unacquainted with Mr. Verelst." Even M. Gentil who had no reason to be partial to Verelst has acknowledged⁷ in his *Memoirs* the humanity and honesty of the Governor.

Upright, amiable, generous, and correct in his personal conduct⁶, Verelst was calm and philosophic by nature. Mr. Campbell, in his letter² of August 18, 1765, to Mr. Strachey relates an interesting story about Verelst's stoic temper, "While he (Verelst) was at dinner with me yesterday, advice

¹ Letter from Clive to the Select Committee, January 16, 1767, "My knowledge of him (i. e., Verelst) is not from the information of others, but from my own observation and experience."

was brought that a vessel of his, worth 14,000 rupees, had foundered at sea. But he is callous to such accidents as would make me run mad. He called for a glass of wine, and said he would get up the loss. This is true philosophy." The address which the members of the Select Committee presented¹⁰ to him on the eve of his departure from India contains a well-deserved tribute to the warm zeal he had ever shown for the service of the Company, as well as to the generosity and disinterestedness with which he had conducted himself as Governor.

While there is no doubt about the fact that Verelst was "as honest and as worthy a man as ever lived,"¹¹ or that he "quitted the Government a poorer man than he entered it,"¹² he was unfortunately lacking in resolution and force of will, the want of which principally accounts for the weakness of his administration.¹³ Clive, an excellent Judge of men, who was fully sensible of the high character of Verelst had misgivings from the outset as to whether the latter also possessed sufficient firmness. This is why he took care to warn¹⁴ Verelst against the consequences that might arise from the least relaxation of control on the part of the executive authorities. From England too, Clive wrote to Verelst, similarly advising¹⁵

¹⁰ Beng. Sel. Com., December 15, 1769.

¹¹ Vide "Short Review of the British Empire in India" by an anonymous contemporary, p. 195.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Mr. Richard Barwell wrote to Mr. E. Hardwick on December 24, 1769, "A long residence in Bengal and the adulation men in so elevated a station as that he filled are accustomed to, I apprehend, have spoiled him (Verelst)" (Vide Bengal: Past and Present, X, p. 241.)

¹⁴ Beng. Sel. Com., January 16, 1767. Vide Clive's farewell letter, "You have integrity, let it not be said that you are deficient in resolution. I repeat that you must not fail to exact the most implicit obedience to your orders. Dismiss or suspend from the service any man who shall dare to dispute your authority."

¹⁵ Letter from Clive to Verelst, dated Bath, November 7, 1767. Vide Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

him to continue in the full exertion of that steadiness and resolution with which he had begun his administration.

That Verelst's rule lacked strength,¹⁶ and that most of his difficulties were due to his vacillation and lack of firmness need not be elaborated here. In his speech before the House of Commons, Clive thus analysed the aforesaid weakness in Verelst's character, " Mr. Verelst, who succeeded me in the government, I do believe to be a man of as much real worth and honour as ever existed; and so far from being wanting in humanity, as Mr. Bolts asserts,¹⁷ I know that he had too much humanity. Humanity, if I may be allowed the expression, has been his ruin. If he had less, it would have been better for the nation, better for the Company, better for the natives, and better for himself. No man came to the Government with a fairer character, and notwithstanding what I have said, I am conscious no man ever left it with a fairer. He acted upon principles of disinterestedness from beginning to end; and let the Directors, if they can, tell me where I could have laid my finger upon a fitter man. But the truth is, he governed with too lenient a hand. The too great tenderness of his disposition, I saw and dreaded."

Verelst commenced his rule with an implicit faith in the system of government introduced by his distinguished predecessor. In his very first minute¹⁸ submitted to the Select Committee after his accession to the Governor's office, Verelst expressed his full determination to adhere strictly to the " wise and judicious plan of politics fixed " by Clive, and claimed that the latter's plan was the best calculated to ensure stability to the affairs of the Company. " Though his Lordship is no longer present to assist us ", Verelst observed with the ardour of a faithful disciple, " yet the legacy he has left us will serve

¹⁶ Verelst himself admits, " That the measures of our government were sufficiently vigorous and decisive upon this (i.e., with regard to Bolts), as upon other occasions, it must be difficult to prove . . . " *Vide Verelst's View, etc.*, p. 41.

¹⁷ Bolts; *Considerations on India Affairs*, p. 91, etc.

¹⁸ Beng. Sel. Com., February 5, 1767. (*Vide Verelst's Minute.*

as a guide for our future conduct." Indeed, Verelst honestly believed that Clive's dual system was not merely a temporary make-shift, or a "Masque", but could be utilised and enforced as a permanent instrument for the welfare of both the Company and the people of Bengal. Being also repeatedly and peremptorily forbidden¹⁹ by the Directors to avoid any public authority over the government on behalf of the Company, Verelst had an added reason to consider himself tied down to the observance of the '*status quo*'.

It was only long after he had assumed office that Verelst could perceive the evil consequences of "a divided and complicated authority."²⁰ Then to his chagrin, he found "a mortifying spectacle of fraud and oppression without the power of interposing". The conviction ultimately dawned upon him that "to hold vast possessions and yet to act on the level of mere merchants" was "highly injurious to our national character, dangerous to the best defended establishment, and absolutely bordering on inhumanity." "The people give us the labour of their hands," he pleaded, "in return we owe them our protection," for, as he rightly held, "the firmest security of every government is the affections of the people."

Even though fully alive to the evils of the dual government, Verelst hoped till the end that the evils could be remedied by suitable modifications of the existing system through such measures as the institution of the Supervisorships. He failed to realise, however, that Clive himself had never looked upon his plan as anything more than a temporary expedient, and that the plan could admit of no lasting reformation without a radical alteration in its very fundamentals. With a conservatism that would be surprising, if it were not honest, Verelst believed that the Company had already reached that

¹⁹ Letter from Court, February 19, 1766.

Letter from Court, May, 17, 1766.

Letter from Court, November 20, 1767.

Letter from Court, March 16, 1768. etc. etc.

²⁰ Beng Pub. Cons., December 16, 1769.

supreme line which,²¹ to pass would amount to an open avowal of sovereignty. "We cannot be more " he protested, " without being greater than sound policy allows."²² This clearly shows that Verelst did not realise the inevitability of what he called "an open avowal of sovereignty". Even while bidding farewell to the members of his Council, he cautioned them to regard "exteriors" as "essentials", and advised them to follow "a middle way" with "safety and advantage", and "without danger of too much confinement or too little liberty". His failure to grasp the futility of "a middle way" is illustrative of his lack of that penetration and foresight which distinguish the statesman of a high order.

But, while Verelst was unwilling to foresee the need for a new policy, he evinced throughout his tenure of office that tender regard for the long-suffering ryot of Bengal, which marks him out as a high-minded administrator in advance of his own time. Conscious as he was of the conditions under which he was placed, he could not forget that sudden changes in government were bound to be dangerous. "Even in laying the foundations of order", he urged with the unerring judgment of an experienced administrator, "we must follow the genius of a people, we must attend to their habits, and even respect the prejudices they have imbibed."²³

²¹ "You are sensible that our name and authority are carried to the utmost line to go beyond it will be to exceed the bounds of good policy" Verelst's letter to the Select Committee, December 16, 1769.

²² Verelst's letter to the Council, December 16, 1769.

²³ Verelst's View, etc., p. 148.

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